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ABSTRACT

Since 1985, the number of adult literacy programs provided by the Toronto Board of Education has increased by 500 percent and learners by almost 300 percent, so that in 1989, almost 9,000 adults are enrolled in nearly 700 classes. Two distinct groups are being served: a unilingual group, most of whom are Canadian-born, English-speaking young adults, and an English as a second language (ESL) group who are typically literate in a language other than English. The differences between the two groups have consequences for program planning, instructional methods, locations of classes, and outreach. Classes are scheduled at most times of the day. Unilingual learners tend to take more hours of instruction per week than ESL learners. Generally, all learners are pleased with their classes, although few attend for more than a year, and the dropout rate is high. Gains for unilingual learners are associated with good attendance, amount of instructor's experience, and a classroom that promotes independent learning. ESL learners' gains are related to length of participation in programs, level of class, the amount of inservice training taken by their instructors, class size (about 10), and classrooms with high levels of participation, interest, and respect, by both learners and instructors. Lead instructors spend at least half their time on administration, although they feel their primary role is program support. Program administrators generally feel that learners are being well served, although specific areas were noted as requiring attention, such as more funds to advertise and integrating adult classes with day school programs. (KC)

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A RESEARCH REPORT ON THE TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION'S RESPONSE TO ADULT LITERACY

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#190

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1985, when The Right to Learn report set out a blue-print for the future development of adult literacy programs, the number of programs has increased by 500% and learners by almost 300%. The Toronto Board of Education now provides literacy instruction to almost 9,000 adults in nearly 700 classes.

There are two distinct groups being served, 1) a unilingual group most of whom are Canadian-born, English speaking young adults, and 2) an ESL-literacy group of somewhat older learners who were not born in Canada but who are typically fluent and literate in a mother tongue other than English. The differences between the two groups have consequences for program planning, instructional methods, location of classes, and outreach.

Classes are scheduled at most times of the day. Unilingual learners tend to take more hours of instruction per week than ESL-literacy learners. Generally, all learners are pleased with their classes, although at any given time few will have been in attendance in a program for more than a year. Literacy classes tend to have high drop out rates.

Gains for unilingual learners are associated with good attendance (and not necessarily length of stay in a program), amount of instructor's experience, and a classroom environment where learners can work independently at their own pace in areas of their own choosing. ESL-literacy learners' gains are related to length of participation in programs, the level of the class (higher is better), the amount of inservice taken by their instructors, class size (about 10 learners) and a classroom environment with high levels of participation, interest, respect, etc. by both learners and instructors.

Lead instructors spend at least one-half of their time on administrative duties and the remainder on program support, although their perception is that their primary role is the latter. When programs are school-based, the principal assumes the role of Supervising Principal with the assistance of a curriculum advisor (who is often a lead instructor elsewhere).

The program administrators generally feel that learners are being well served, although some specific areas were mentioned as requiring attention: e.g. more funds to advertise programs, and integrating adult classes with day school programs.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Toronto Board of Education established the Work Group on Adult Literacy on June 28, 1984. Participants in the Work Group were Board staff, trustees, and one outside consultant. As well, there was an advisory committee made up of representatives from community-based literacy programs, literacy movements and ethnic organizations. Its mandate read:

> "The Work Group would examine workplace programs, possibilities for literacy campaigns including outside funding, support services (i.e. child care) and so on, with a view to making sure that the Toronto Board of Education is making the maximum possible effort in the ABE/ESL area." (Board Minutes, 1984, pp.603-4.)

To this end, the Work Group prepared The Right to Learn report, essentially a blueprint for the provision of adult basic education programs by the Board. The report released in October, 1985 included a recommendation that:

> "9.8.5. The Information Services Division be requested to develop and implement a research study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Adult Basic Education programs provided for in this Report. The study is to be completed by the fall of 1988." (The Right to Learn, 1985, p. 46)

Although the recommendation asks only that the effectiveness of programs be evaluated, most of The Right to Learn is devoted to the long range plans which its authors believed were required to achieve effective and viable literacy programs. Therefore, to answer the questions in a more complete way, considerable effort

was spent on examining the implementation of the structures called for in The Right to Learn.

Although The Right to Learn report made mention of numeracy skills, the clear emphasis was on literacy, and that focus has been maintained in this research study.

At the time that the Work Group was investigating the extent of adult functional illiteracy in Toronto (1985) the Toronto Board of Education was operating 27 unilingual (English only) literacy classes in 17 locations. In addition, there were 2 community-based literacy organizations which the Board funded and which provided one-to-one unilingual tutoring in literacy. In the fall of 1985, the first ESL-literacy classes were being established. The literacy classes were supervised by one lead instructor assigned to one of the two Adult ESL Administrative Resource Centres. These few classes, together with the program support they received from the single lead instructor, provide the background against which the Board's efforts in adult literacy from 1986 to the present should be considered; they provide, in effect, a benchmark.

This report begins with a brief discussion on the extent and consequences of adult illiteracy, followed by a methodology section. The main section of the report is devoted to the findings and each section begins with a summary. The

implications for policy and programming are included with the conclusions. The final section describes a number of directions which future research might take.

Commonly used terms are defined in Appendix A.

2. THE EXTENT AND CONSEQUENCES OF ILLITERACY

The latest census (1981) shows that 22% of the residents of Toronto have less than a grade nine education, the minimum level of education needed to be considered functionally literate under the standard set by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). It has been estimated that there are approximately 135,000 illiterate adults living in Toronto, and between 387,000 and 689,000 in Metropolitan Toronto. (Census Canada, 1981 and Creative Research Group, 1987).

Contrary to the commonly held impression that illiteracy stems directly from a lack of formal education, 1.5 million illiterate adults in Canada have completed high school. The illiteracy rate for recent high school graduates is 13% to 17%. Among drop-outs the illiteracy rate climbs to 24%. (Creative Research Group, 1987.) Approximately half of the 12,000 persons incarcerated in Canadian prisons are illiterate. (Correctional Services Report cited in the Toronto Star, 26/5/87.)

Illiteracy also affects older Canadians in disproportionate numbers; nearly half of the illiterate adults are 55 years of age or older although this age group represents only 30% of the Canadian population. (Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1985.)

In a rapidly changing and highly technological society, the inability to read can have serious consequences, both for the individual and for society. Illiteracy can bar individuals from many employment opportunities. For those with jobs, it can affect productivity and safety in the workplace. For parents, the inability to read to their children, to understand report cards and notices from the school, to read instructions on medications, to gain access to the social support system if required, to provide a positive learning role model, etc. may have a profound impact on their children's lives.

3. THE PROPOSAL AND METHODOLOGY

The variety of programs mandated by The Right to Learn report and the organizational structure created by and for these programs necessitated a research proposal which was equally far ranging and comprehensive.

Before preparing the research proposal, visits were made to a number of literacy programs to observe classes and meet with administrators, instructors and learners. Also, an unproductive literature review was done. During this exploratory phase, it became clear that a traditional research model would not be appropriate for a number of reasons. The limitations imposed on the research are listed in Appendix B.

Ultimately, there were three rounds of interviews with learners and instructors, repeated observations of classes and interviews with administrators and Board staff.

To facilitate the research and simplify matters, this study does not deal with the issue of defining literacy or illiteracy. Indeed, these definitions often change with different times and different places. For the purposes of the study, any adult registered in a program which falls within The Right to Learn mandate was presumed to have decided for himself/herself that s/he was in need of improving his/her language skills.

4. THE RESULTS

The results of the research are of two basic types: descriptive and analytical. The descriptive results include a discussion of each level of the literacy hierarchy including learners, their instructors, lead instructors/curriculum advisors/school principals, the Adult Basic Education Unit, and the Continuing Education Department of the Curriculum and Program Division. The analytical results examine learner performance in reading, writing and speaking and the factors which contribute to the acquisition of these skills.

In addition, a macro-analysis of illiteracy as it is found in Toronto comprises Appendix C.

The text which accompanies the Figures has been kept to a minimum and has been omitted altogether where the charts are self-explanatory.

4.1 THE PROGRAMS

Summary

The yearly increases in the numbers of learners being served is parallelled by the increases in the numbers of programs established to serve them. From 91 programs in 1984, there were 137 programs in 1985, 205 programs in 1986, 418 programs in 1987

and 550 programs in 1988. These figures represent a 504% increase in the number of programs established over these four years.

Most adult ESL-literacy classes which are offered by the Toronto Board of Education meet in elementary schools. Some classes are provided by the Toronto Board of Education in cooperation with other agencies, such as The John Howard Society, East End and Frontier College. In addition, many other (usually unilingual) programs are provided indirectly, by the Toronto Board of Education's support to community agencies which deliver the programs in a variety of settings and ways.

Both groups of learners rate their classroom learning environments highly in terms of 1) the time of day classes are held, 2) number of instructional hours available per week, 3) location of the class, 4) instructor's teaching style and 5) learning materials provided in class.

At any point in time, most learners from both groups will not yet have completed a year of study. Also, attendance in both ESL-literacy and unilingual-literacy classes is quite good; at least fifty percent from either group attend at least 80% of the time.

Generally, classes for unilingual-literacy learners are more flexible in terms of the time of day they are offered. Almost

half are given on an irregular basis. All ESL-literacy learners' classes are regularly scheduled. Similarly, the number of days per week classes are offered is more flexible for unilingual-literacy classes than for ESL-literacy classes. ESL-literacy classes tend to be offered fewer hours per week than unilingual literacy classes. These differences are explained by the fact that the one-to-one tutor-learner arrangement is common among unilingual, but not ESL programs.

Learning Environments Rated by Learners (Figures 1-5)

Each learner was asked to rate his/her learning environment on a five-point scale (very poor to very good), in five areas: 1) time of day classes are held, 2) number of instructional hours available per week, 3) location of the class, 4) instructor's teaching style and 5) learning materials provided in class. Clearly, the data summarized in Figures 1-5 show that the majority of unilingual and ESL-literacy learners rated their environments as good or very good. If there was any dissatisfaction mentioned, it was with the location of the class.

Figure 1

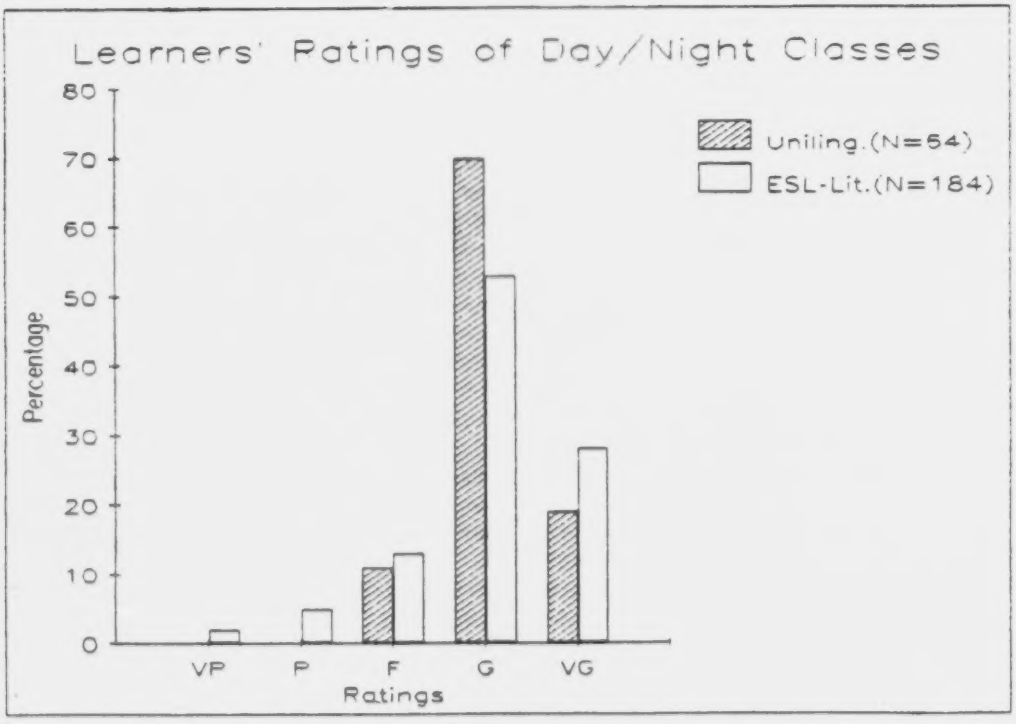
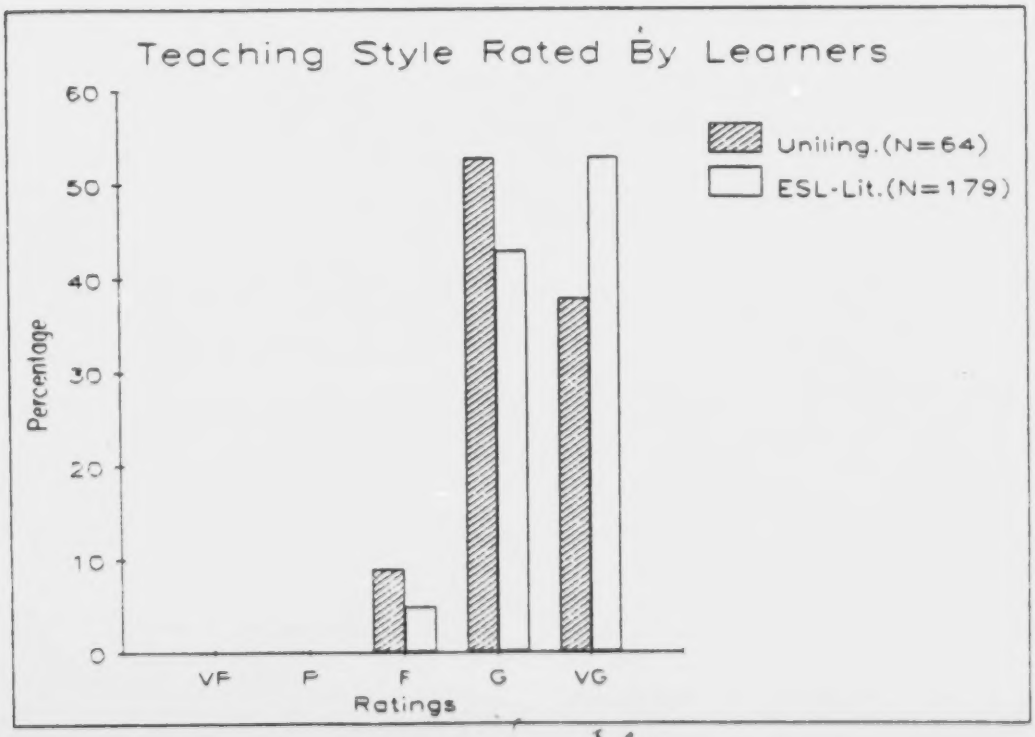


Figure 2



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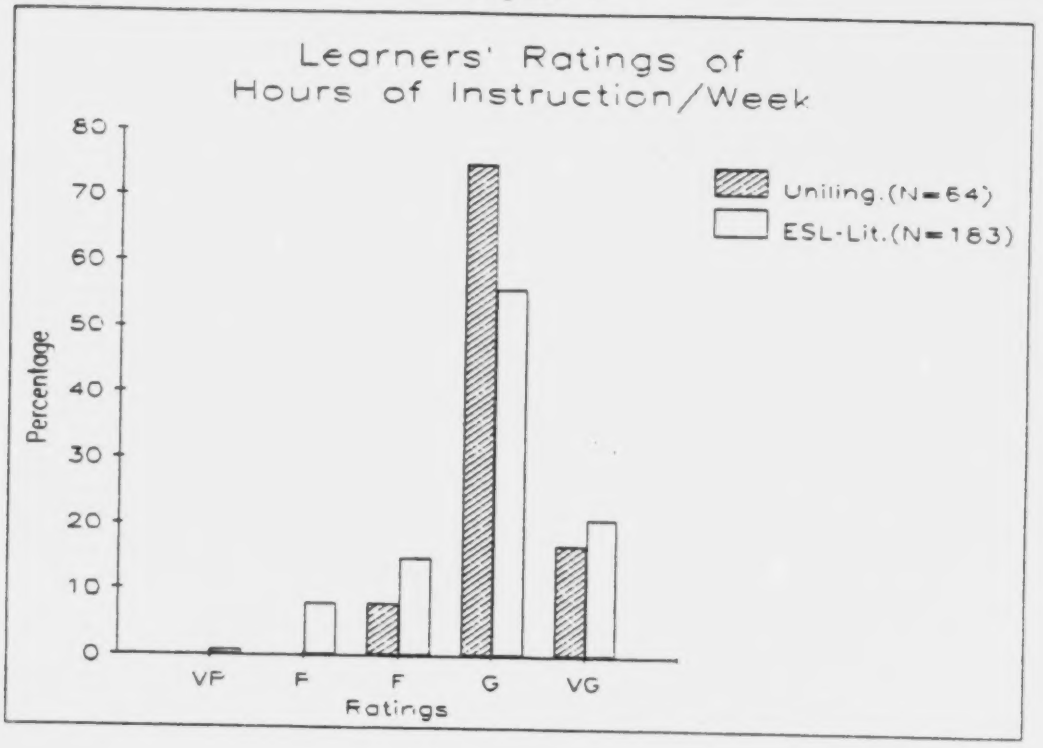

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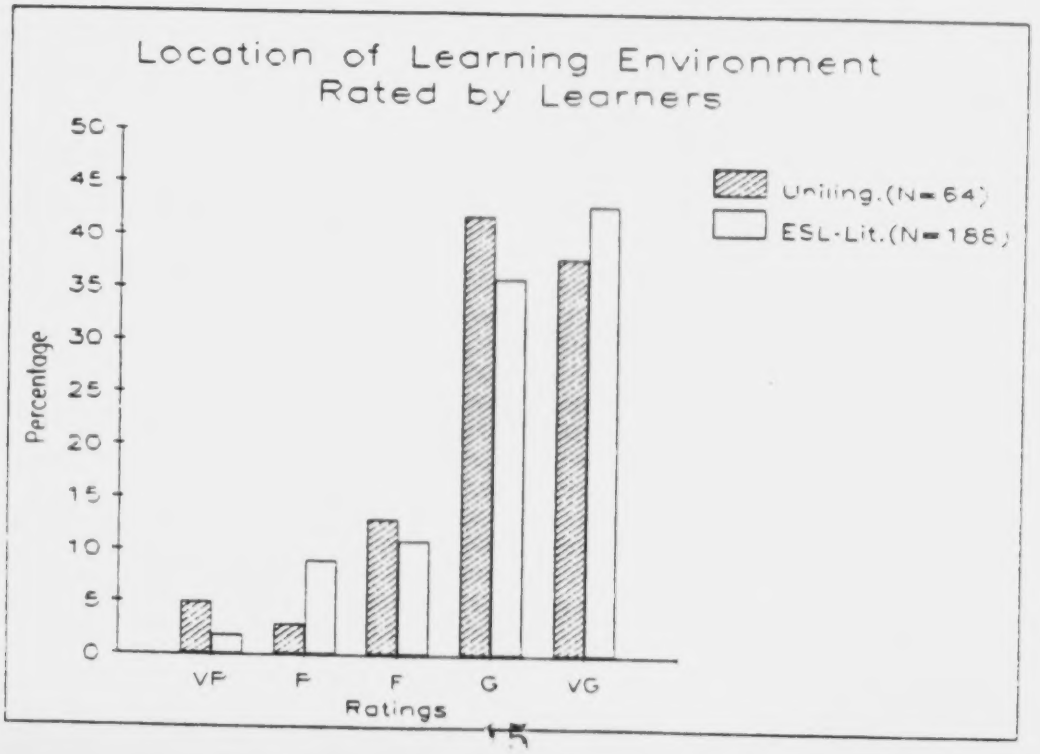
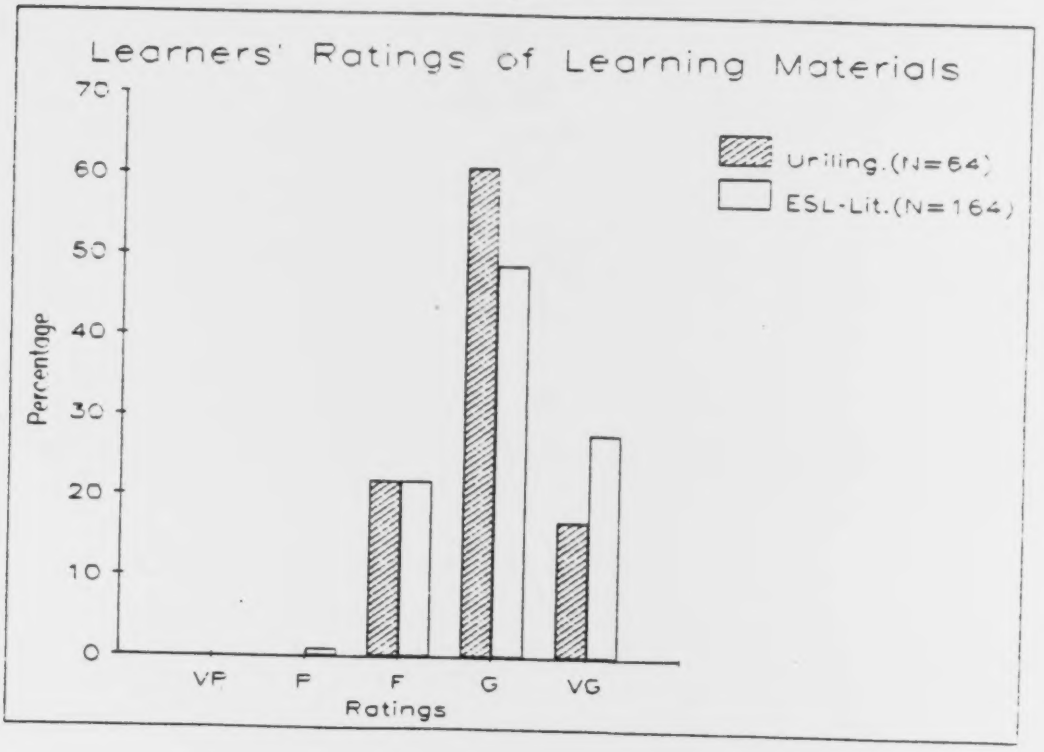


Figure 5


Learners' Ratings of Learning Materials
Drilling.(N=64)
ESL-Lit.(N=164)
Percentage
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
VP
P
F
G
VG
Ratings

Participation in Programs (Figures 6-7)

Figure 6 shows that at any given point in time, most learners from both groups have not yet completed a year of study. Few learners attend classes for more than a year, usually not long enough for learners to acquire fluent language skills.

Attendance is high considering that it is almost entirely voluntary and adult learners have many other things going on in their lives. Figure 7 shows that at least fifty percent from either group attend at least 80% of the time.

Figure 6

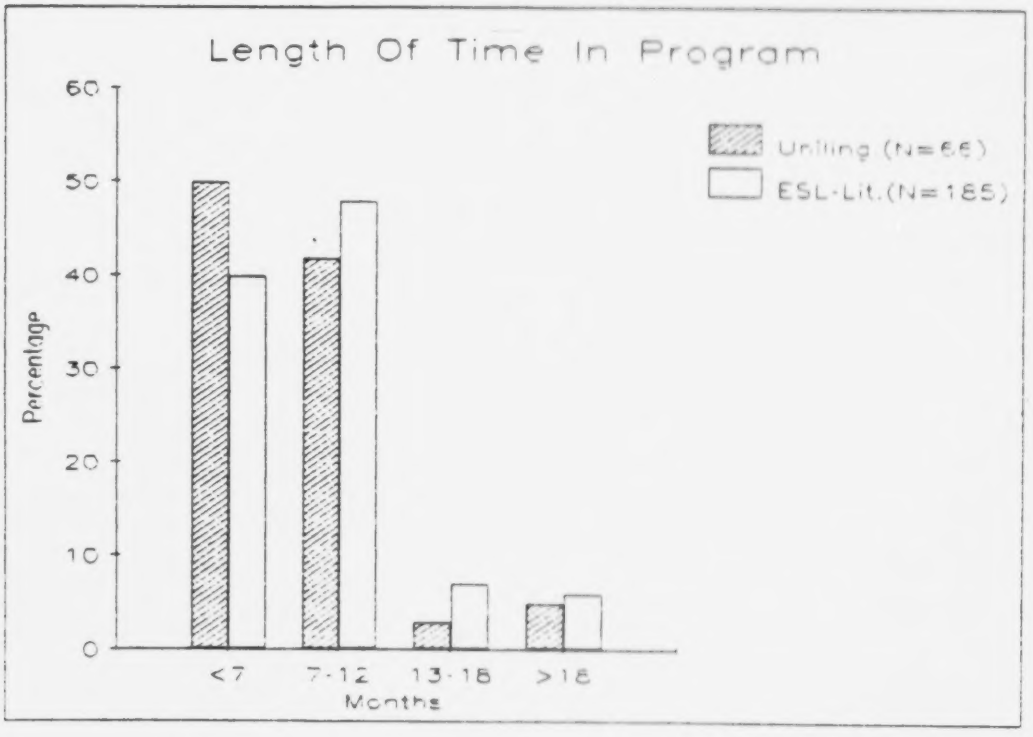
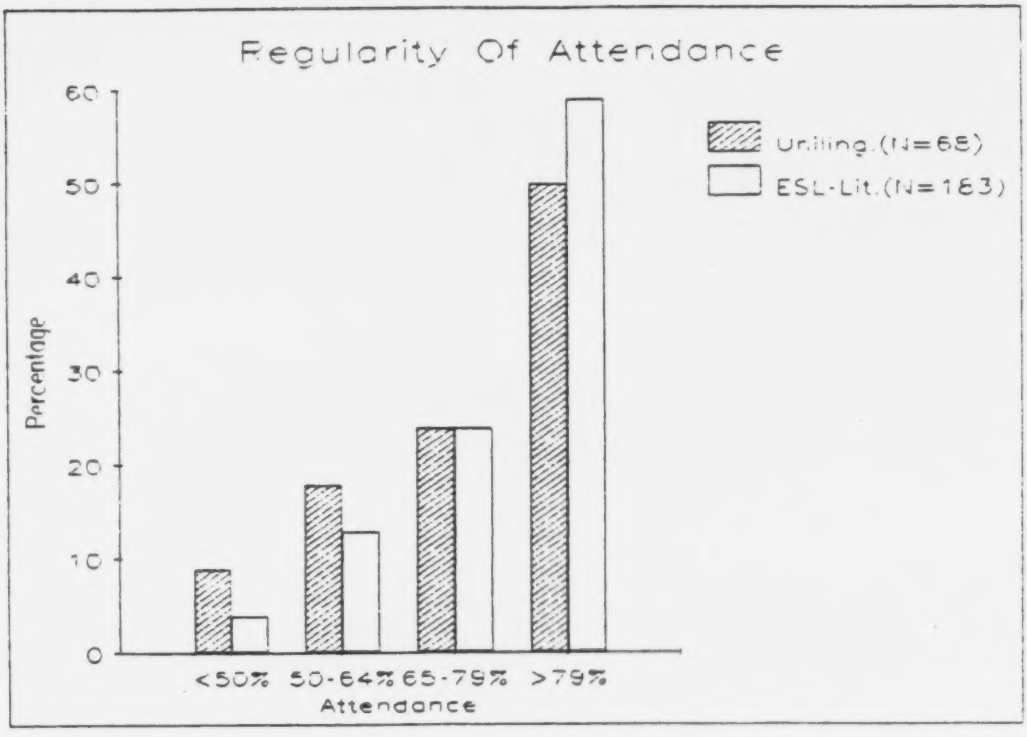


Figure 7


Regularity Of Attendance
Percentage
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
<50%
50-64%
65-79%
>79%
Attendance
Unilling.(N=68)
ESL-Lit.(N=183)

Class Schedules (Figures 8-10)

Figure 8

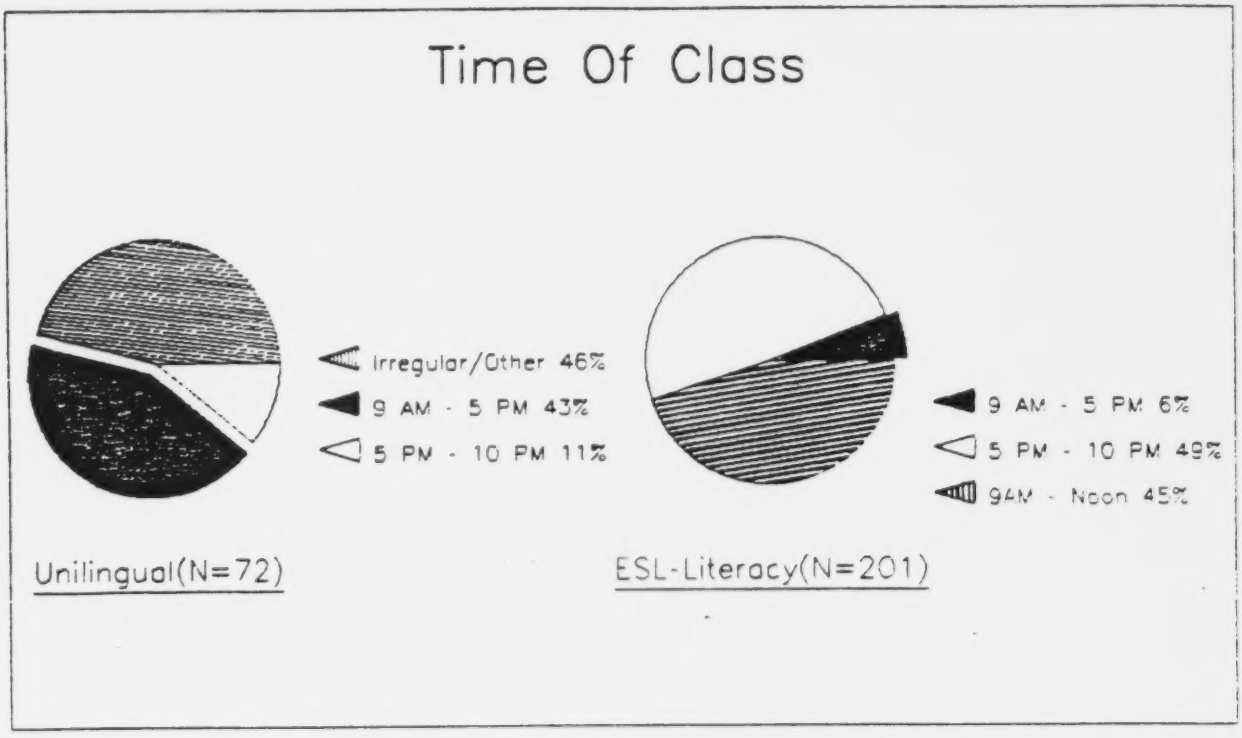


Figure 9

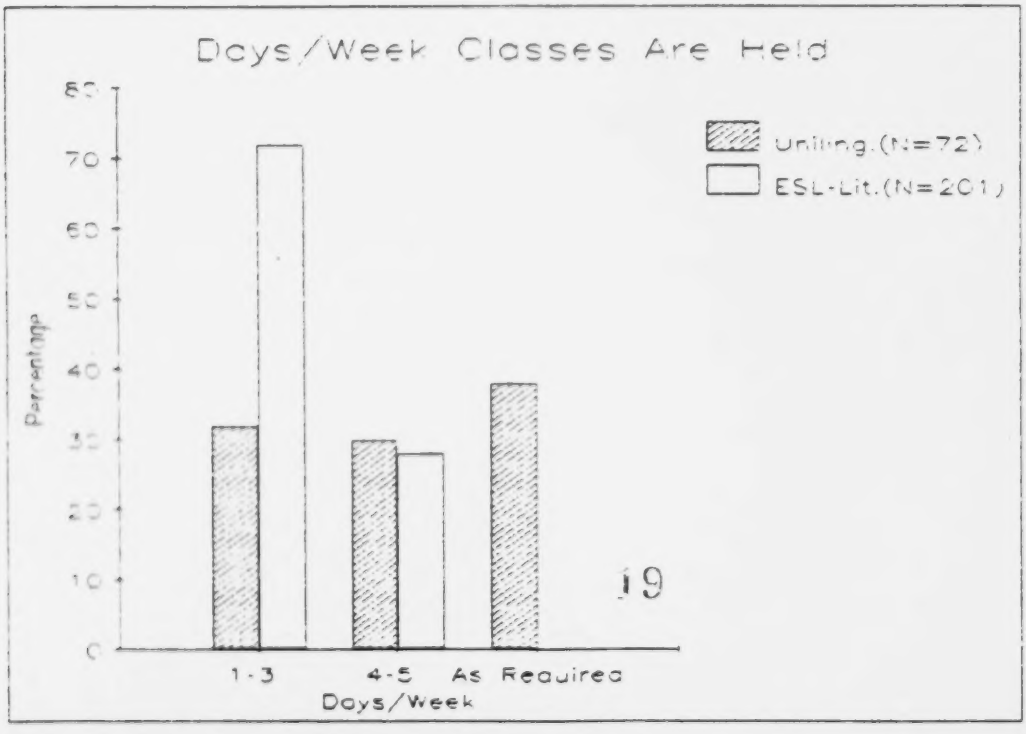
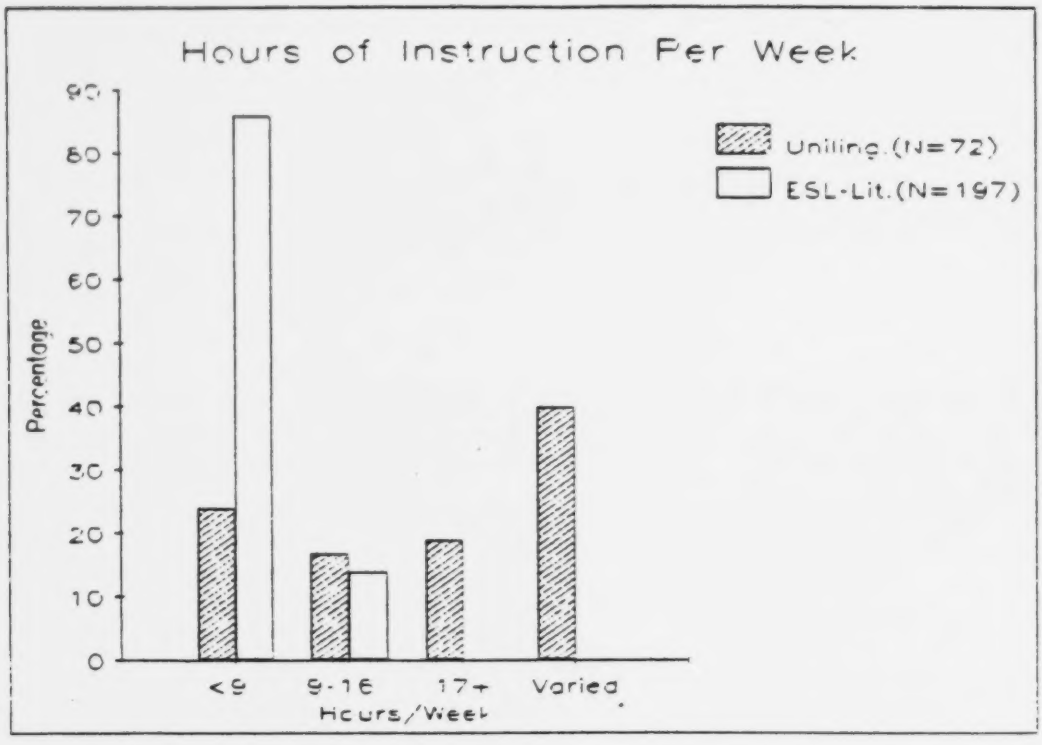


Figure 10


Hours of Instruction Per Week
Percentage
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Unilinç.(N=72)
ESL-Lit.(N=197)
<9
9-16
17+
Varied
Hours/Week

4.2 THE LEARNERS

A. Learner Performance

Summary

The performance data summarized in Figure 11-13 show that for the majority of learners, reading and writing gains were usually moderate.

As mentioned earlier, many elements of a traditional research design were inappropriate for this study. However, because some measure of language performance was required, a scale was constructed consisting of a combination of the instructor's rating of a learner's performance in reading, writing, and in the case of ESL-literacy learners, speaking; learners evaluated themselves in the same three areas. Oral language skills were determined to be not applicable in the case of unilingual learners.

Figure 11

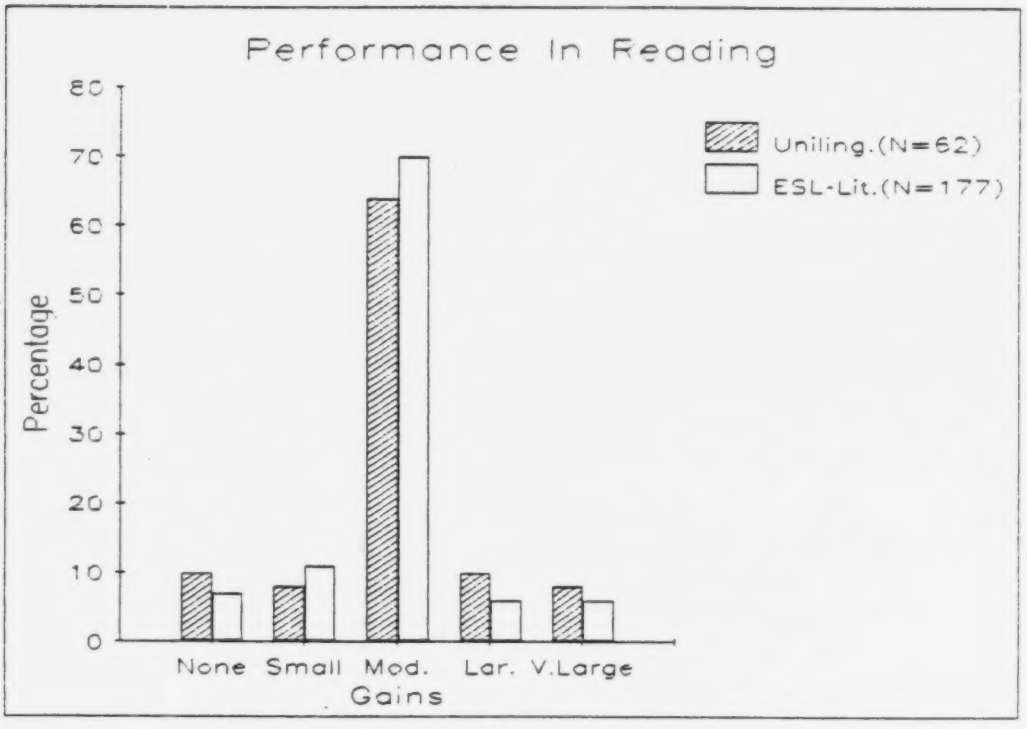


Figure 12

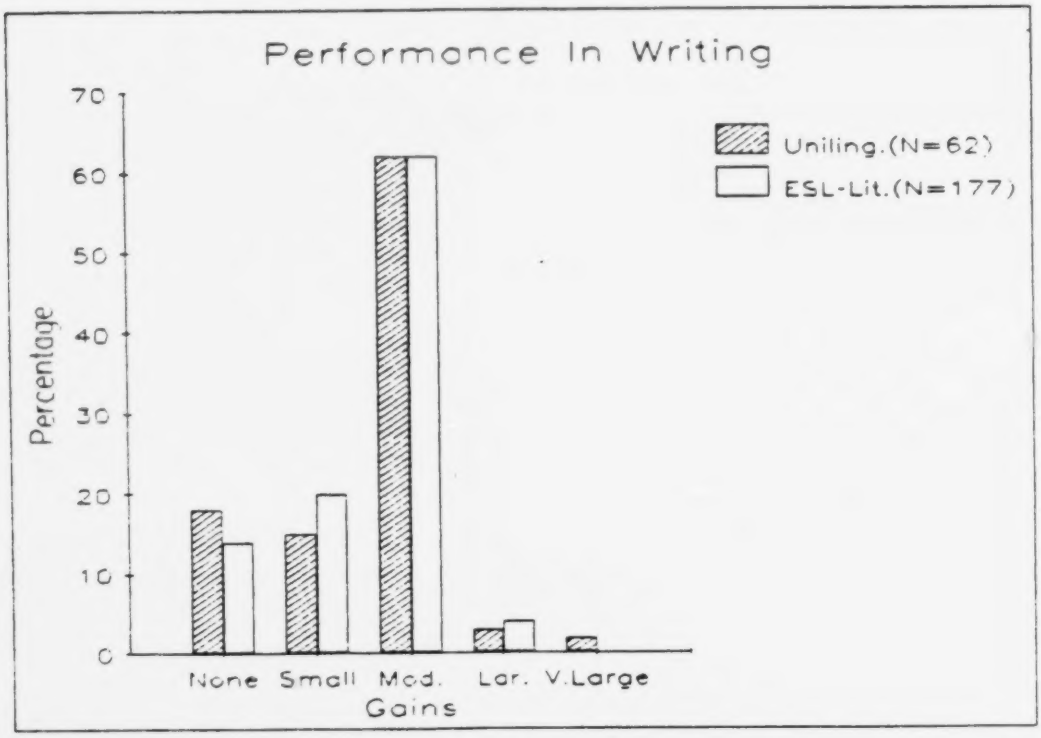
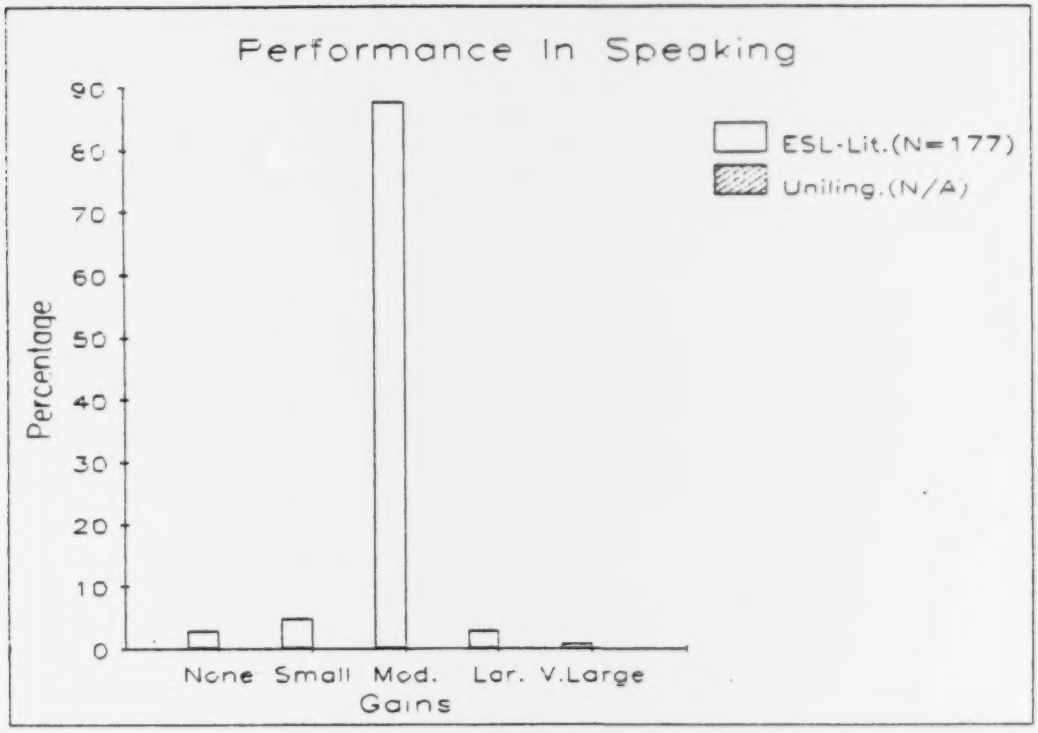


Figure 13


Performance In Speaking
Percentage
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
None
Small
Mod.
Lar.
V.Large
Gains
ESL-Lit.(N=177)
Uniling.(N/A)

The following analyses identify several key factors which are related to a learner's progress.

For ESL-literacy learners, the key factors are:

- length of participation in a program
- the level of the class
- inservice taken by instructors
- class size of about 10 learners
- classroom environment with high levels of participation, warmth, interest, respect, etc. by both learners and instructor.

For unilingual learners, the key factors are:

- good attendance
- instructor's length of teaching experience
- classroom environment where learner can work independently at their own pace on topics of their own choosing.

Instructor-Learner Classroom Behaviours and Learner Performance

All classes were observed and rated on sixteen items (eight instructor-related and eight learner-related) quantifying some aspect of learner-instructor interaction. For both groups, the items were participation, interest, initiating behaviour, respect, freedom to move about, responsiveness, warmth, and directedness. (See Table 1 for definitions.) These scores, divided into low and high categories about the midpoints were cross-tabulated with learner performances in reading, writing and speaking which were also, divided into high and low categories.

TABEL 1

These are the operational definitions of the eight items upon which each observed class was measured on a 5-point scale.

Participation	-	a measure of the amount of interaction/communication (usually verbal) exhibited by learners and instructors during a learning situation (opposite = disengagement)
Interest	-	a measure of the enthusiasm and behaviour intended to engage either the learners and/or the instructor into the learning situation (opposite = no interaction)
Initiating Behaviour	-	a measure of the opportunity for learners and instructors to begin a dialogue, start new topics, develop themes, etc. (opposite = reactive behaviour)
Respect	-	a measure of the amount of consideration and regard, learners demonstrate toward themselves and their instructor and the instructor toward the learners (opposite = no interaction)
Freedom to move about	-	a measure of the opportunity for learners and instructors to leave their seats and move about (opposite = fixed positions, stationary)
Responsiveness	-	a measure of the degree of reaction, learners to instructor and instructor to learners (opposite = unresponsiveness)
Warmth	-	a measure of the affection/camaraderie shown by learners for the instructor and instructor for the learners (opposite = independence)
Directedness	-	a measure of the opportunity for learners and instructors to effect the course and nature of a learning situation (opposite = freedom to choose)

The detailed results are summarized in Appendix D.1 for both the unilingual and ESL-literacy groups.

Chi-square tests of statistical significance indicate that when ESL-literacy instructors score high on the teaching/learning behaviour scale (ie. high participation, interest, etc.), their students make statistically significant gains in reading and speaking. Also, when learners score high on the scale, they make gains in their speaking skills. In other words, ESL-literacy learners make gains in reading and speaking when there is a high level of participation, interest, warmth, responsiveness, etc. exhibited by both learners and instructors. No relationship to writing emerged.

The relationships revealed for the unilingual group show that reading is strongly related to the classroom behaviours of instructors and learners. However, the relationship is the opposite from that of the ESL-literacy group. In contrast to the ESL-literacy learners, unilingual learners' acquisition of reading skills is facilitated when their instructors create classroom environments characterized by independent work situations for learners, where they can work on topics and areas of weakness of their own choosing (within reason) and at their own pace with limited interaction with their instructors.

Instructor/Instruction Characteristics and Learner Performance

Several additional variables (ie. years of teaching experience, inservice assessments of learners, progress of learners monitored, contact with leads and class size) which were hypothesized to be related to learner performance were examined for both groups. For the ESL-literacy learners, the only relationships which were statistically significant were 1) between the taking of inservice by instructors and learners' writing performance and 2) class sizes of less than ten and learners' reading and writing performance. (See Appendix D.2.)

Data for unilingual instructors and learners reveal a different pattern of relationships. Inservice and class size are unrelated to reading and writing performance for unilingual learners, but years of teaching experience does show a significant relationship. (See Appendix D.3.)

Some of the data lend themselves to more sophisticated analyses. The detailed results are included in Appendix E. The following summarizes those findings.

The analyses found that for the ESL-literacy learners, two variables were related to performance in reading, writing and speaking. These variables are the length of time learners stay in class (as opposed to frequency of attendance) and the

learner's level of English proficiency at the time of enrollment. Other relationships emerged from the analyses. For example, five variables which describe the ESL-literacy learner's satisfaction with his/her learning environment are related to the regularity of attendance. Learners who are satisfied with the class hours, the teacher's style, the hours of instruction per week, the learning materials available and location will attend classes on a regular basis.

For unilingual learners, the acquisition of language skills is related to regularity of attendance rather than length of participation.

Unilingual learners who are satisfied with their class's location are more apt to believe that they will continue to participate in classes for a longer period of time.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the amount of previous education held by learners is not related to any other variables.

B. Learner Characteristics

Summary

Prior to this research effort, our understanding of who attends literacy programs was largely impressionistic. Therefore, considerable effort was expended in gathering data on learners to

determine i) exactly who can be found in literacy classes, ii) why they are there and iii) how well they are progressing. Similarly, if it is possible to describe the groups which are being served, it may also allow us to say something about who is not. There are two groups of adult learners which will be discussed in this section. One group which is comprised primarily of Canadian-born English-speaking adults attending basic education or upgrading classes who are referred to as unilingual learners. The second group which is comprised of foreign-born adults who did not learn English as a first language and are attending ESL-literacy classes are referred to as ESL-literacy learners.

It is important to note the growth in the number of literacy learners being served over the last four years. In 1984, 2,295 learners were enrolled in classes; in 1985 there were 2,424 learners; in 1986 there were 3,868 learners; in 1987, there were 7,773 learners; and in 1988 there were 8,895 learners being served. In other words, over a relatively short period of time, the number of learners being served by the Continuing Education Department has increased almost three-fold.

A comparison of the two learner profiles given in Table 2 shows that we are providing literacy instruction to two fairly distinct groups. Summarily, the "typical" unilingual learner is a young Canadian-born adult, single (possibly with a child), unemployed and living on a limited income in a temporary or unstable

residential situation. The learner is as likely to be male as female. If married, his/her spouse holds a better job than s/he. S/he has had at least some high school but left for personal reasons and has been out of school for several years. S/he did not return to school earlier because s/he lacked the motivation to do so. If married, s/he enjoys his/her spouse's support. The fact that s/he learned of the class through an institutional network suggests that the motivation to attend classes did not come entirely from the learner but rather that the learner is fulfilling some kind of "requirement", sometimes as a prerequisite to further educational efforts or with the longer term goal of finding work or a better job.

There are few completely illiterate adults in this group. Rather, many can read but not read critically or read for meaning. Others have some reading skills but not sufficient to read a novel. Still others have chosen not to read and their skills have deteriorated over time.

On the other hand, the "typical" ESL-literacy learner is somewhat older, married, likely female with a family. She was not born in Canada (probably in Europe) and immigrated as a young adult. She has about an equal chance of being employed as not; however, if she is working it will be at a 40-hour a week job paying a minimal wage. Her children are as likely to attend a Metropolitan Separate School Board school as a Toronto Board of

Education school. Her older children will have better jobs than she, as does her spouse. Although she has only a grade school education and has been out of school for many years, she reads and speaks a language other than English fluently and perceives herself to be literate in that language. English is spoken infrequently in the home except when the conversation is initiated by the children. Her personal situation is relatively stable (eg. permanent residence, high social integration) and she enjoys her spouse's support in her attempts to learn English. Social networks are important; she learned of her class through family or friends; is going there partly to socialize with others as well as to learn English (often for the sake of her children) and probably was not ready to return to class until a high level of social integration was achieved. Similarly, she was unable to return to school earlier because of work and family commitments and a lack of awareness regarding educational opportunities. She is unable to speculate as to how long it will take her to achieve her literacy goals although, (often unrealistically) she may estimate a year's time. Her long-term goals are also family oriented: to stay in Canada and raise her family.

TABLE 2

LEARNER PROFILES

Unilingual (N= 72)	ESL-Literacy (N= 201)
Canadian-born (78%)	European-born (64%); none born in Canada
	immigrated as young adults; none as young children
young adult	older adult
single (78%)	married (74%)
male-female (50%-50%)	female (63%)
1.1 children per learner	1.4 children per learner
48% of the parents are single	8% of the parents are single
low income	low income
32% employed; of these, 59% work full-time	49% employed; of these, 75% work full-time
(insufficient sample)	children have better jobs than parent-learners
(insufficient sample)	Children are as likely to be MSSB students as TBE students
(insufficient sample)	high spousal support
37% live in rental accommodation 9% are homeowners	66% live in rental accommodation 32% are homeowners
29% in residential care (eg. group home, nursing home, jail)	none in residential care
17% living in unstable situations (eg. hostel boarding house, street)	1% living in unstable conditions
most rate themselves as fluent readers and writers of English	most rate themselves as fluent in languages other than English
	very little English is spoken at

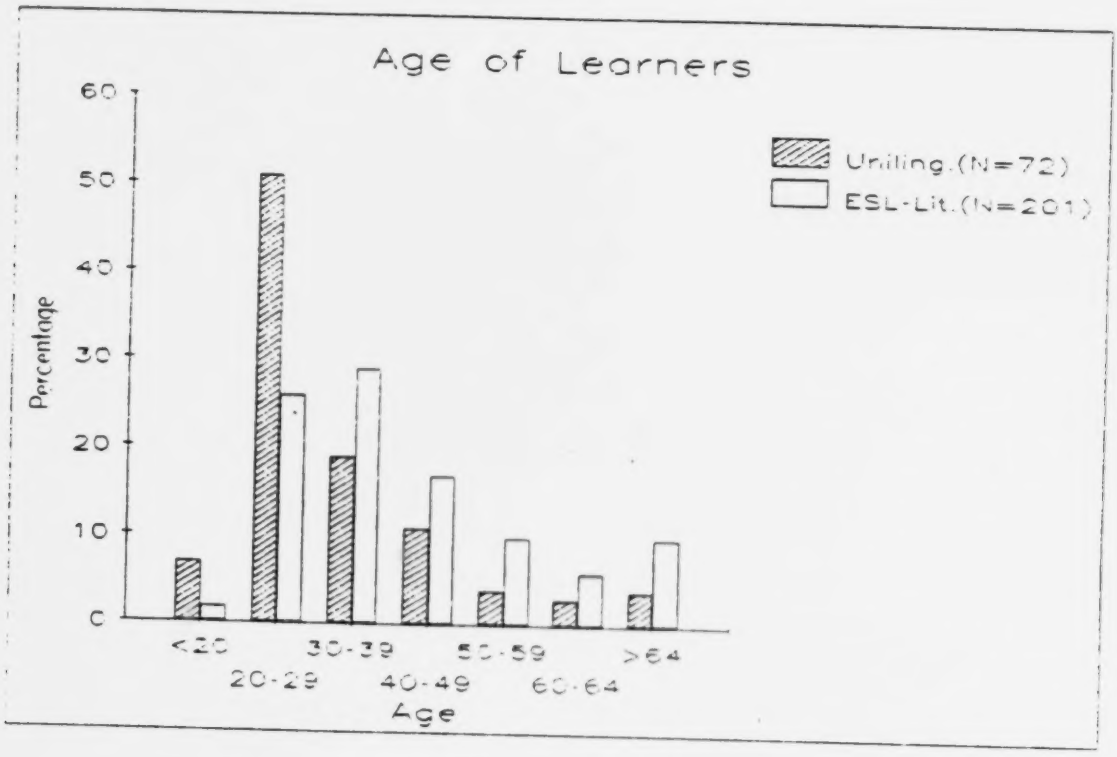
Table 2 continued

	home between learner and spouse; more English is spoken to children; even more English is spoken when the child initiates the conversation; English is most common when the conversation is between children
61% have grade 9 or more	65% have grade 6 or less
20% out of school at least 20 years	55% out of school at least 20 years
interrupted education for personal reasons (eg. not interested, failing, too old)	interrupted education for cultural reasons (eg. not allowed or expected to continue)
didn't return to school earlier because not motivated sufficiently	didn't return to school earlier because of work and family commitments and lack of awareness regarding educational opportunities
(not applicable)	high social integration (eg. no real problems with everyday activities)
return to class to prepare for further education (77%) and to socialize (34%)	return to class to learn English (96%) and to socialize (23%)
learned of class thrpugh institutional network (66%)	learned of class through personal social network (55%)
walk (23%) or public transit (39%) to class	walk (59%) or public transit (30%) to class
35% expect to attend class for 1 year to reach goals	34% expect to attend class for 1 year to reach goals
40% could not speculate as to how long it would take to reach goals	44% could not speculate as to how long it would take to reach goals
In five years time, 48% wanted to find jobs and 37% wanted better jobs	In five years time, 46% wanted to stay in Canada, 43% wanted to stay at home and raise families

The following presents the details of the preceding summary.

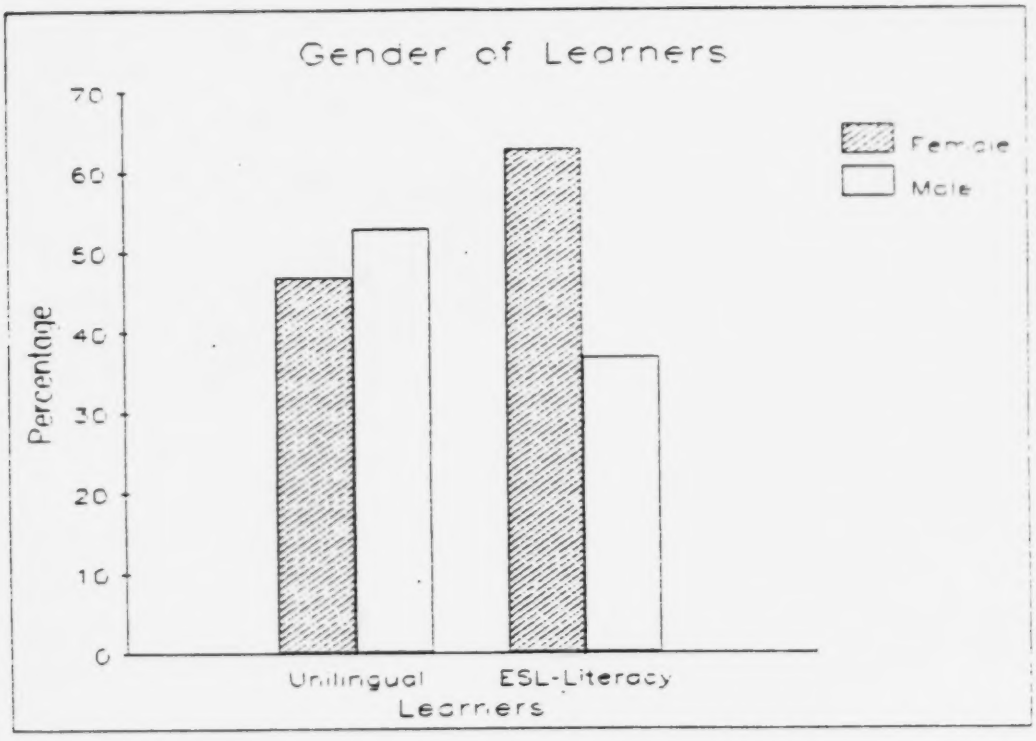
Age of Learners (Figure 14)

Figure 14



Gender (Figure 15)

Figure 15



Place of Birth and Year and Age on Arrival in Canada (Figures 16-18; Appendix F)

Figure 16

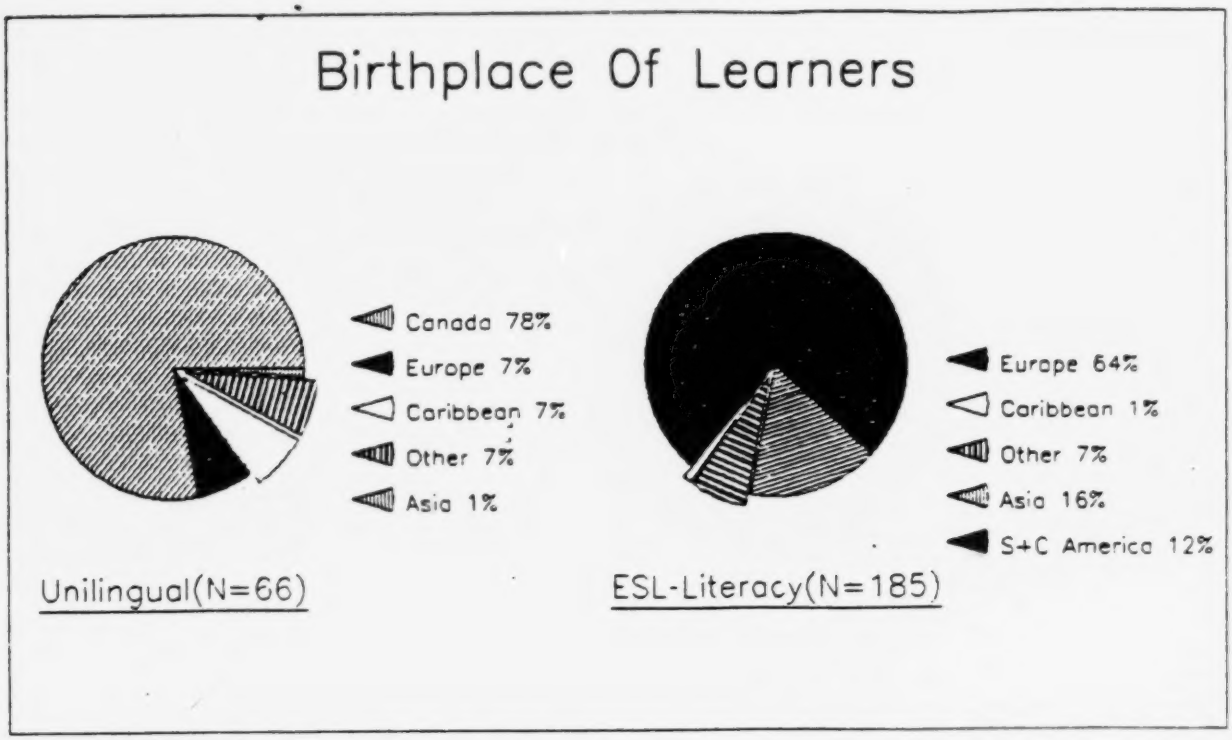


Figure 17

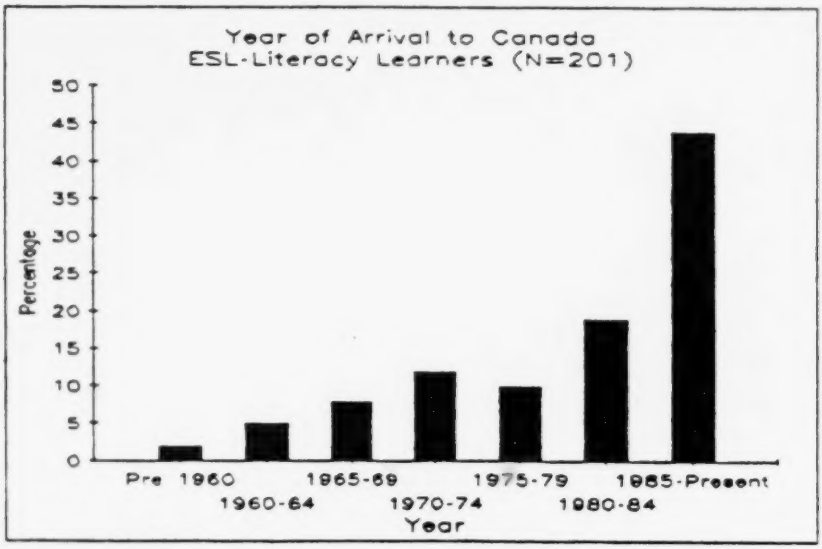
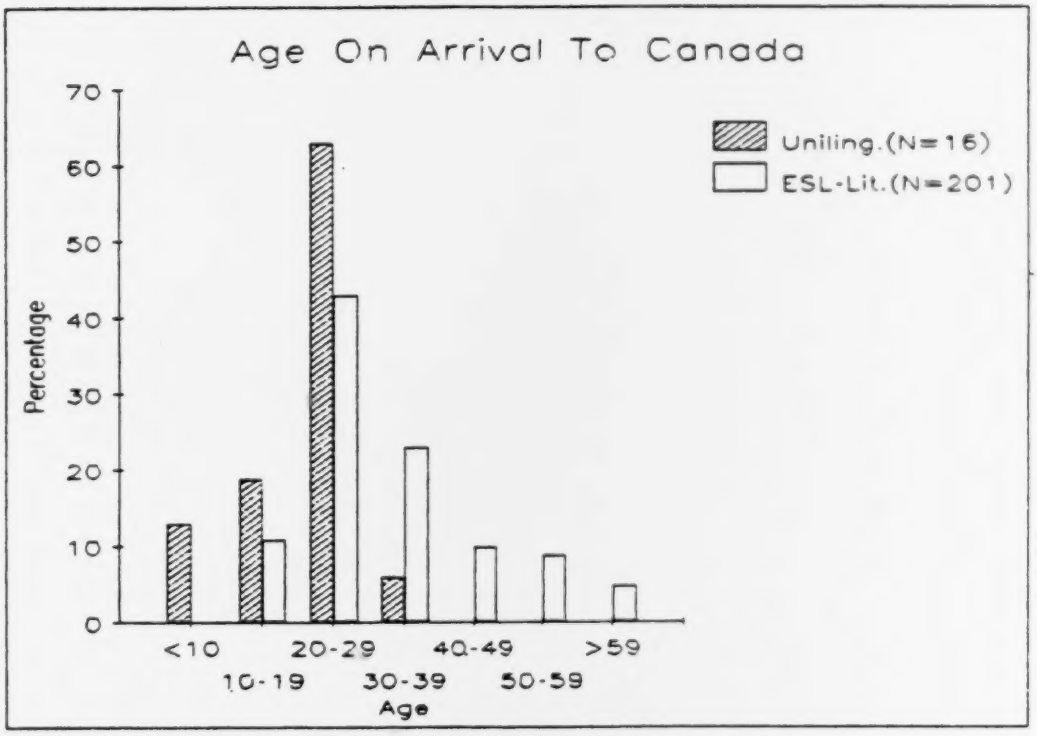


Figure 18


Age On Arrival To Canada
Uniling.(N=16)
ESL-Lit.(N=201)
Percentage
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
<10
10-19
20-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
>59
Age

Language: History and Current Status (Table 3; Figures 19-21)

TABLE 3

FIRST LANGUAGE(S) LEARNED

Language	Unilingual % *	ESL-Literacy % *
English	72	0
French	3	0
English and French	1	0
English and Other	4	a
French and Other	0	2
Portuguese	0	57
Chinese	0	10
Spanish	0	9
Greek	0	8
Italian	6	2
Tamil	0	3
Turkish	0	3
Patois	4	1
Amharic	4	1
Persian	0	2
Panjab	0	1
Ojibwe	3	0
Arabic	0	a
Cree	1	0
Hindi	1	0
Kurdish	0	a
Mandingo	1	0
Oromo	0	a
Sarhaloly	1	0
Sign Language	1	0
Sindhi	0	a
Swahili	0	a
Total (N of respondents)	(72)	(201)

NOTE: Respondents provided up to two languages.

* Percentages are calculated on the basis of the number of respondents. Therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.

a = Less than 1%.

Present language skills for the two groups of learners are presented in Figures 19-21. Surprisingly, more than eighty percent of the unilingual learners report themselves to be fluent readers and writers of English. Observations support this finding. Very few unilingual learners could be classified as totally illiterate. It may be more accurate to say that many were slow, indifferent or selective readers/writers. Most of these learners are in literacy classes as a pre-requisite to further education. No ESL-literacy learners said they were fluent readers, writers or speakers of English and/or French. However, most indicated fluency in one or more languages other than English or French. Again, observations support this contention.

Figure 19

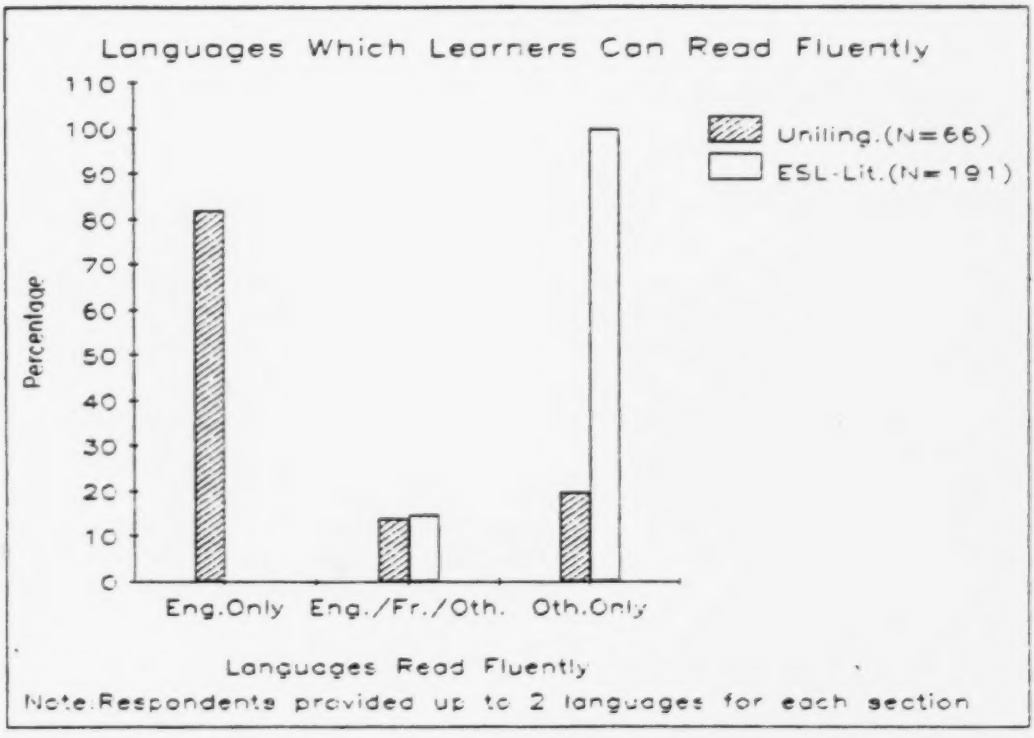


Figure 20

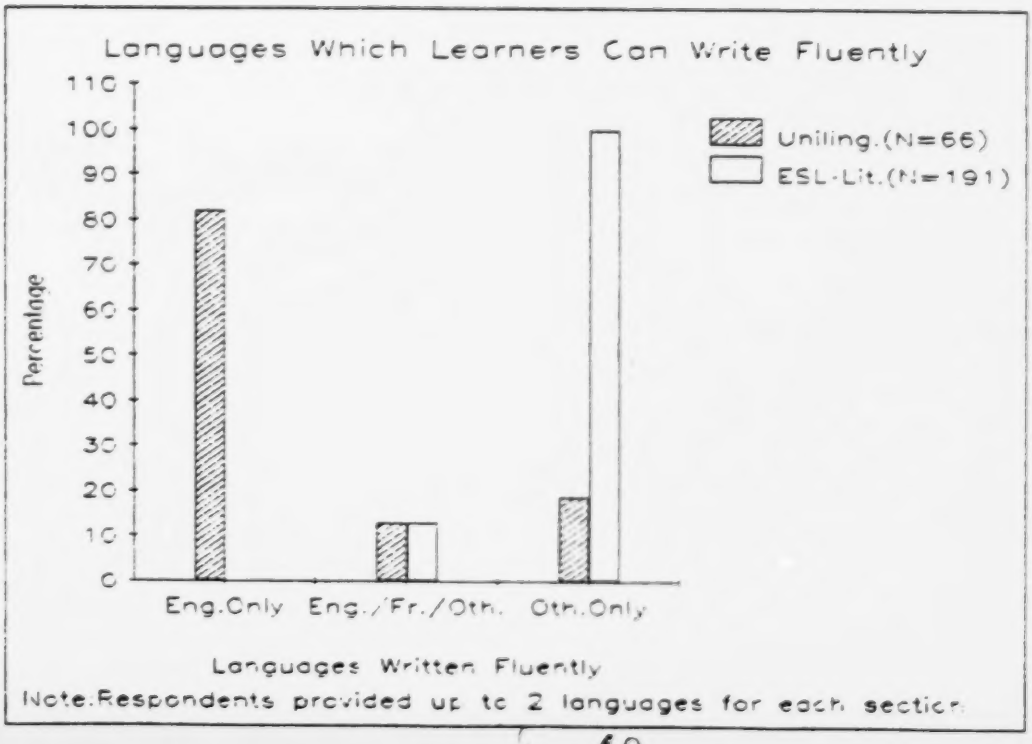
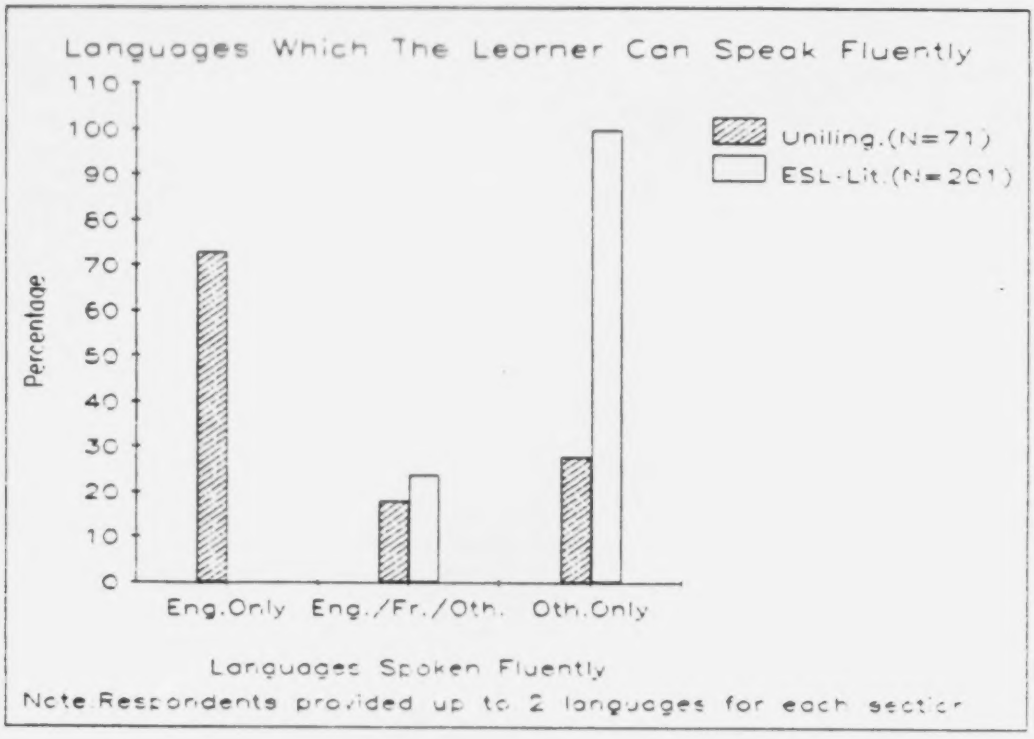
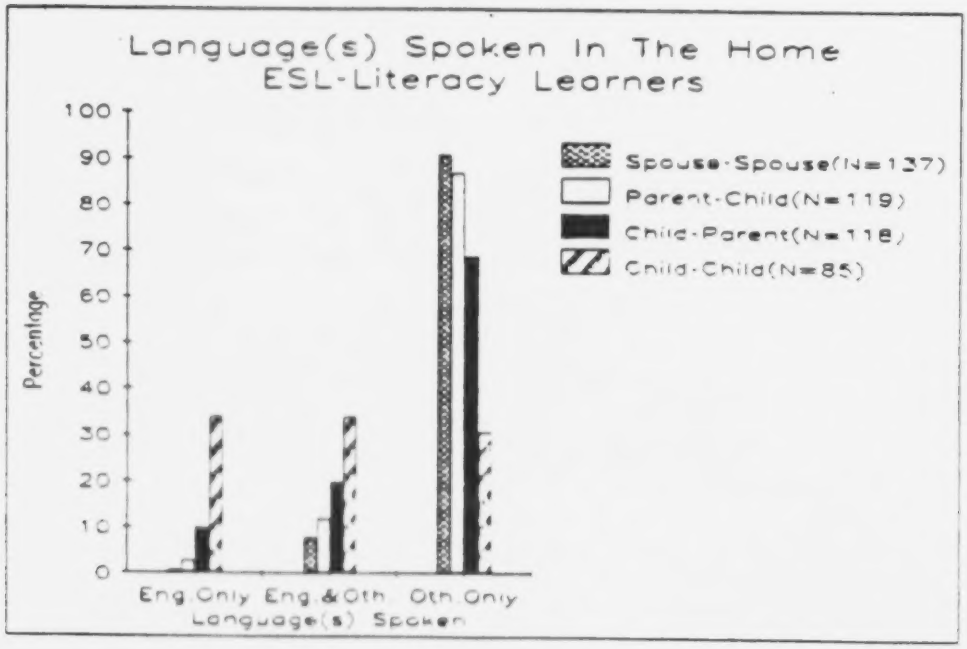


Figure 21


Languages Which The Learner Can Speak Fluently
110
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Percentage
Uniling.(N=71)
ESL-Lit.(N=201)
Eng.Only
Eng./Fr./Oth.
Oth.Only
Languages Spoken Fluently
Note:Respondents provided up to 2 languages for each sector

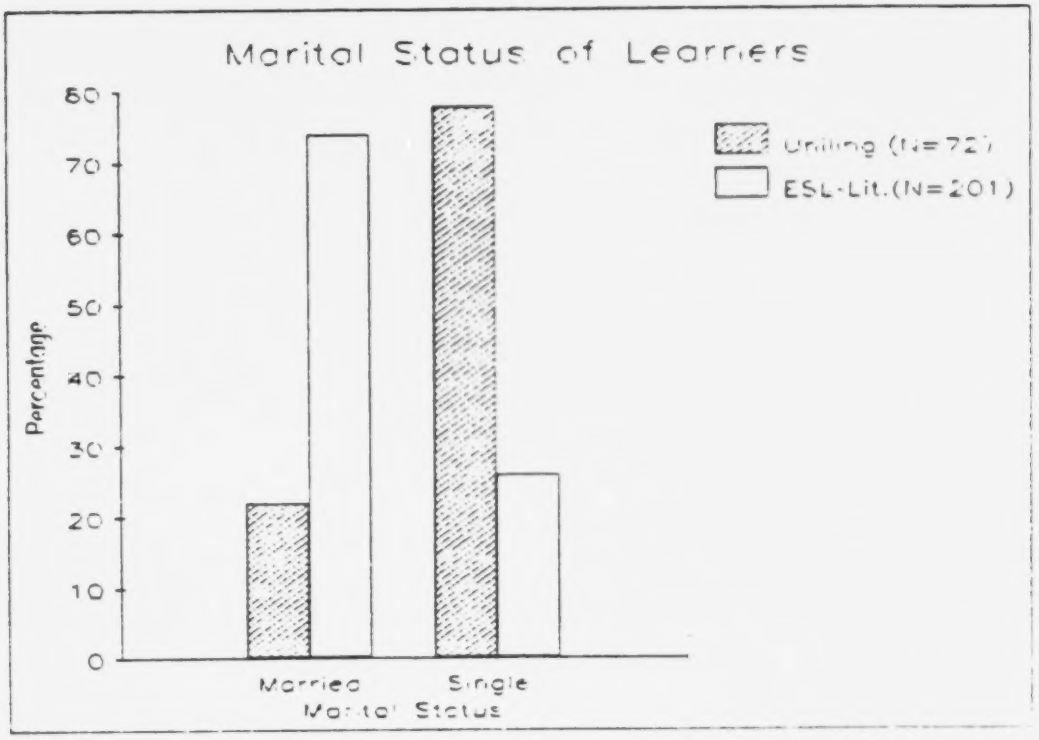
Because of the importance of using English away from class, ESL-literacy learners were asked what language(s) were spoken in the home. Figure 22 shows clearly, the tendency for learners to use their native language ("Other Only") when they initiate conversation. Between the learner and his/her spouse, the first language learned ("Other Only") was used in 91% of the households while between parent and child it was used in 87% of the households. However, English is used more commonly when children speak to their parents and even more often when conversation is between children.

Figure 22



Marital Status (Figure 23)

Figure 23



Occupations (Figures 24-26; Appendix G)

Figure 24 shows that almost seventy percent of the unilingual learners fall into the Non-Remunerative occupational group (eg. housewife, unemployment insurance recipient, retiree and student) While almost half of the ESL-literacy learners fall into this category. Of those who are employed, most are working at unskilled clerical and blue collar jobs.

The occupational scale developed by Pineo, Porter and McRoberts (1977) is used.

Figure 23

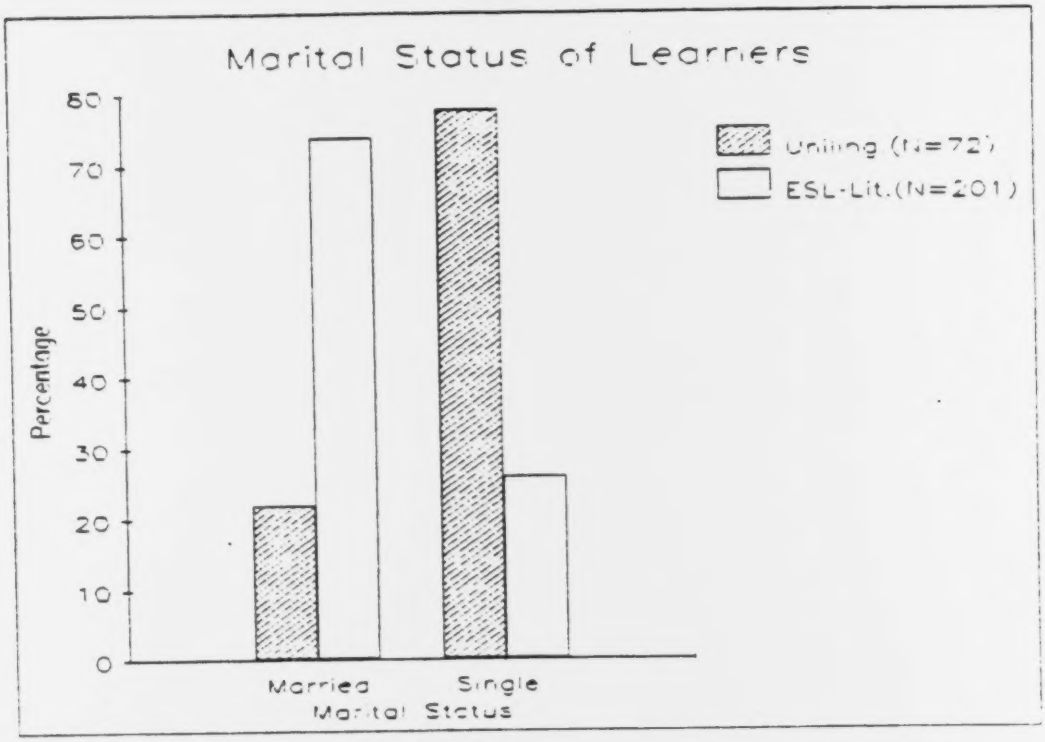
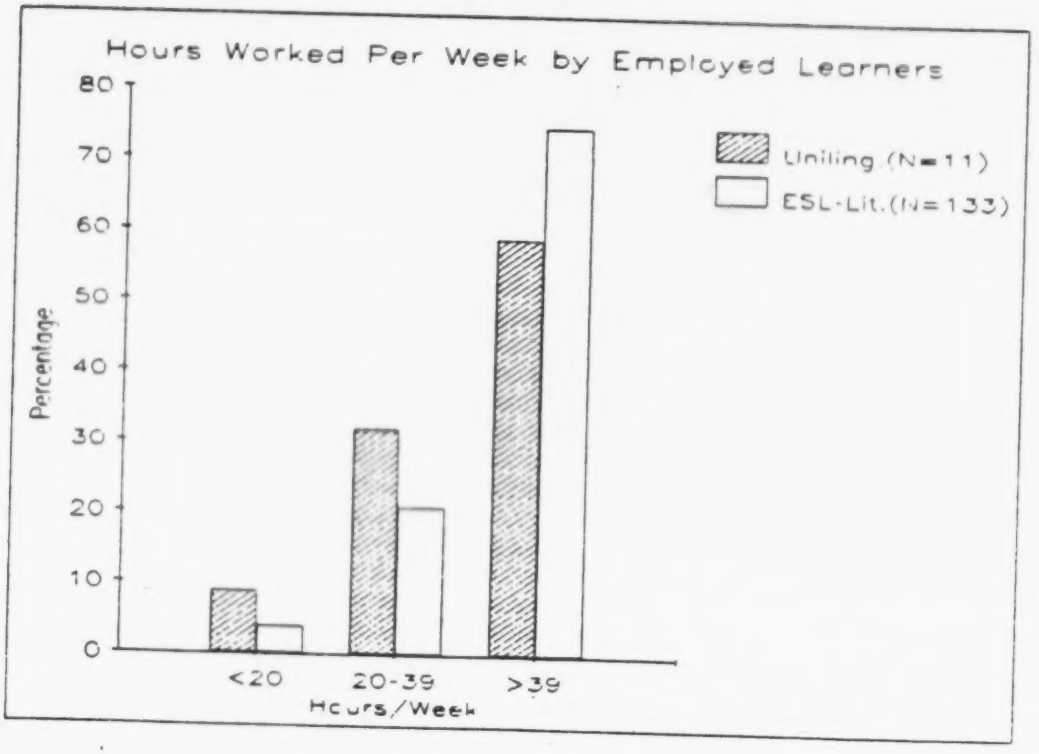
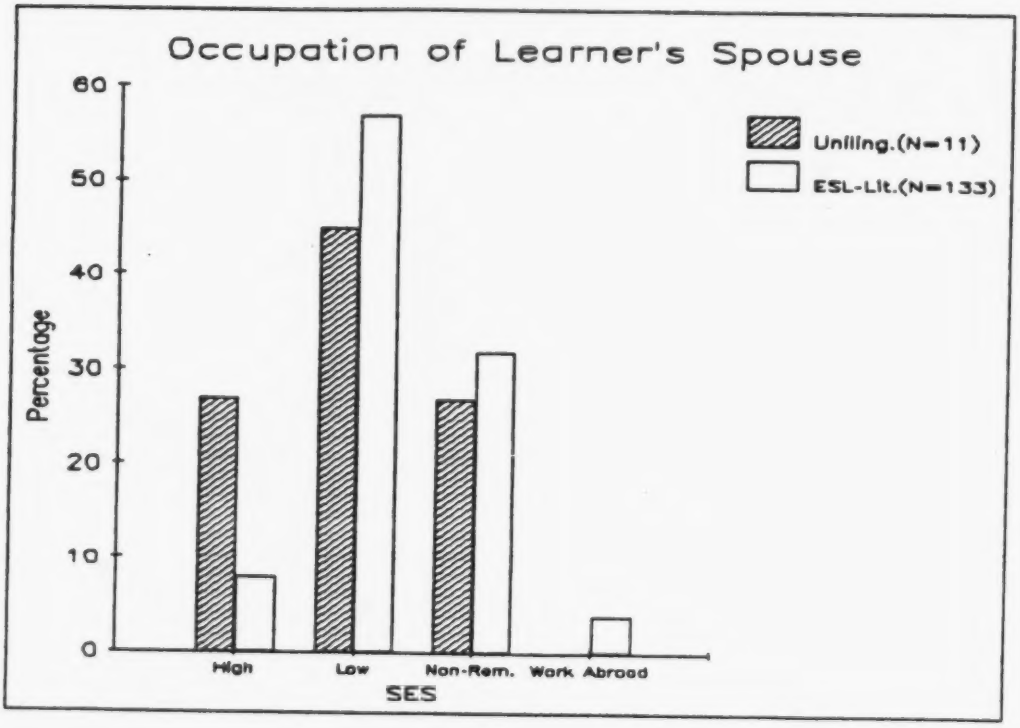


Figure 25


Hours Worked Per Week by Employed Learners
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Percentage
Uniling (N=11)
ESL-Lit.(N=133)
<20
20-39
>39
Hours/Week

Data collected on the occupations of spouses are summarized in Figure 26. (Because of the small size of this sample, the unilingual group must be interpreted with caution.) Although they are by no means high wage earners, they are higher on the occupational scale than their learner spouses. (Compare to Figure 24.) This gap may account for some of the learners' motivation to return to school.

Figure 26



Spousal Support of Learner (Table 4)

Married learners were asked if their spouses were supportive of their efforts to resume their education. This question was asked at two time-points to see if there were any changes in support after the learner had been attending classes for some time. Table 4 shows that support was high among spouses of ESL-literacy learners and remained high. (The sample of unilingual spouses was too small for analysis).

TABLE 4

SPOUSE'S SUPPORT - ESL LITERACY LEARNERS

Support	T_1 %	T_2 %
Supportive	92	95
Indifferent	6	2
Against	2	3
Total (N of respondents)	(128)	(116)

Children of Learners (Figure 27-30)

Figure 27

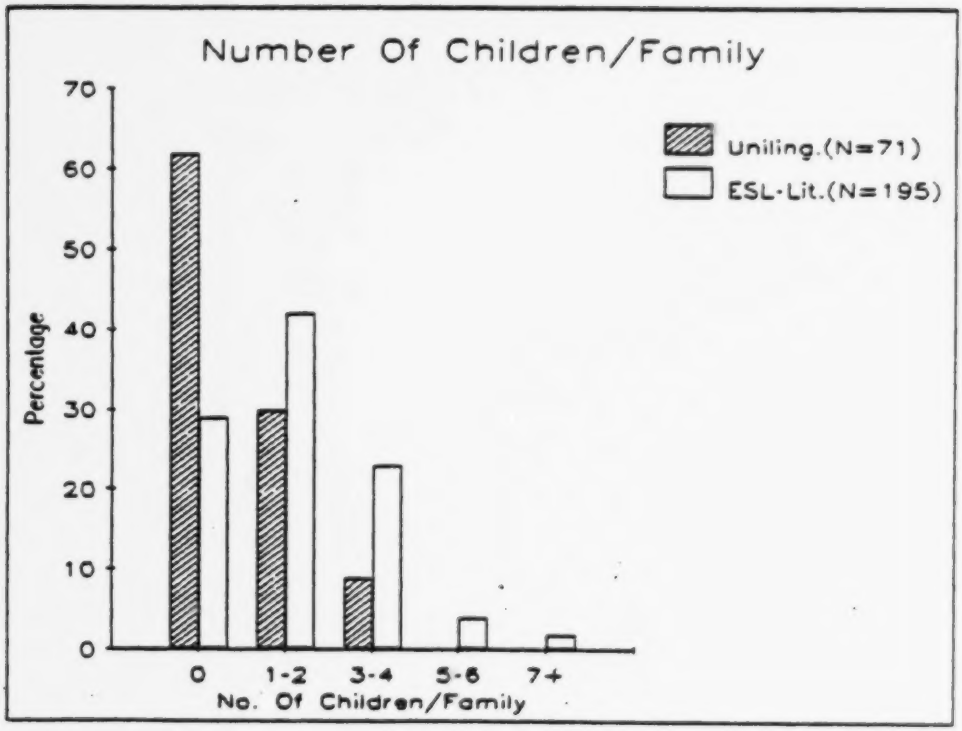


Figure 28

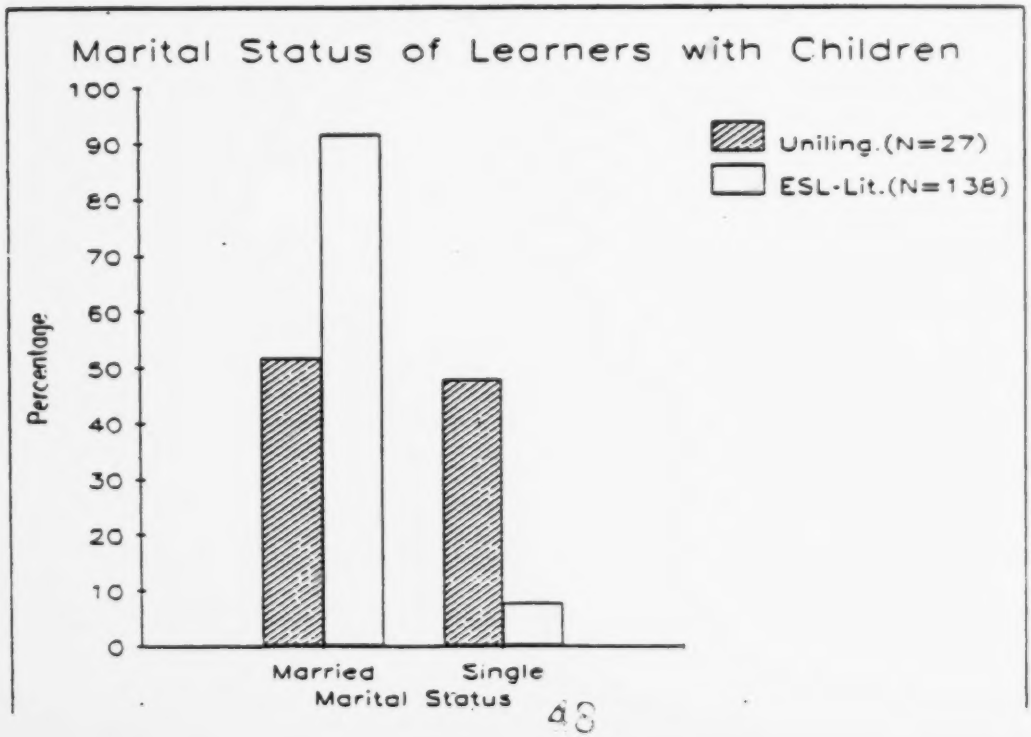


Figure 29

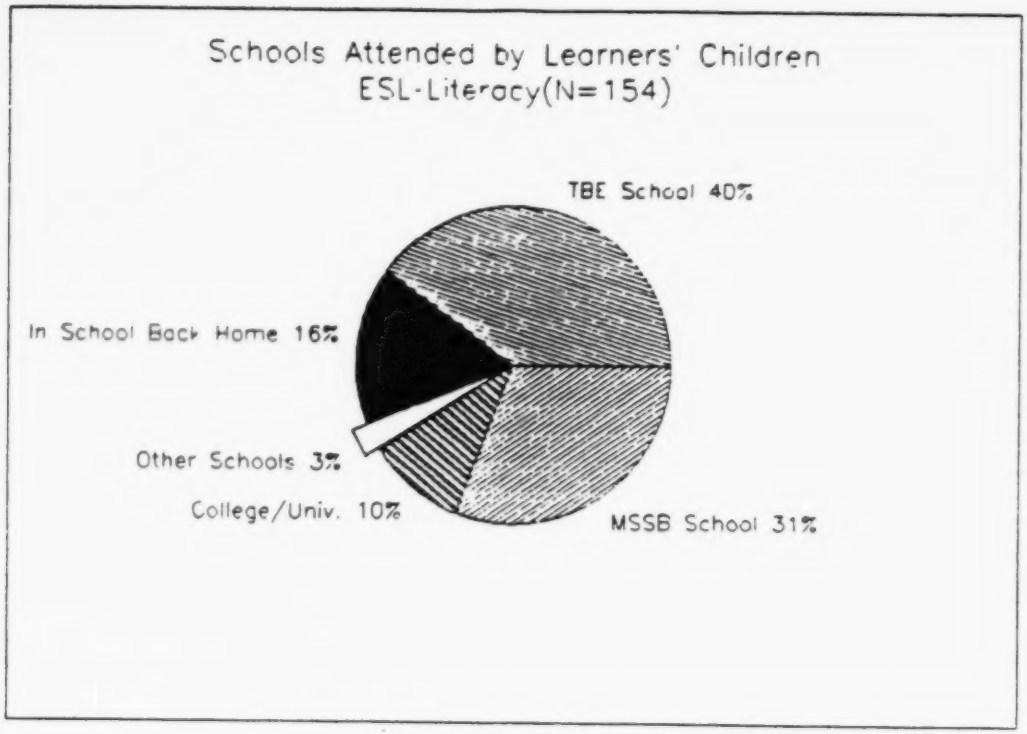
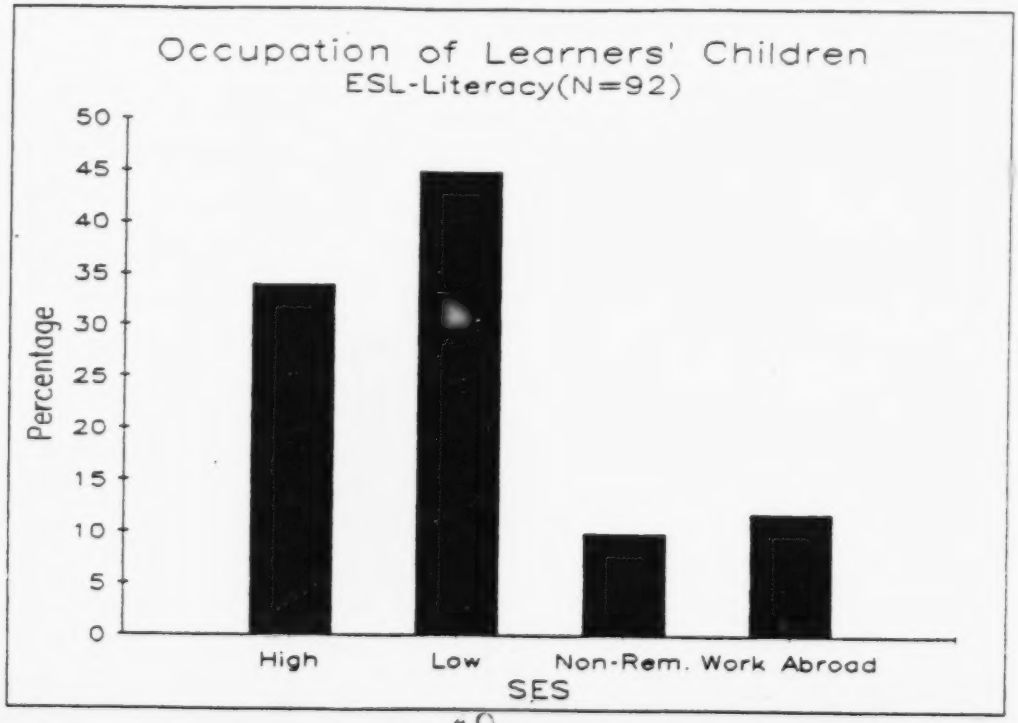


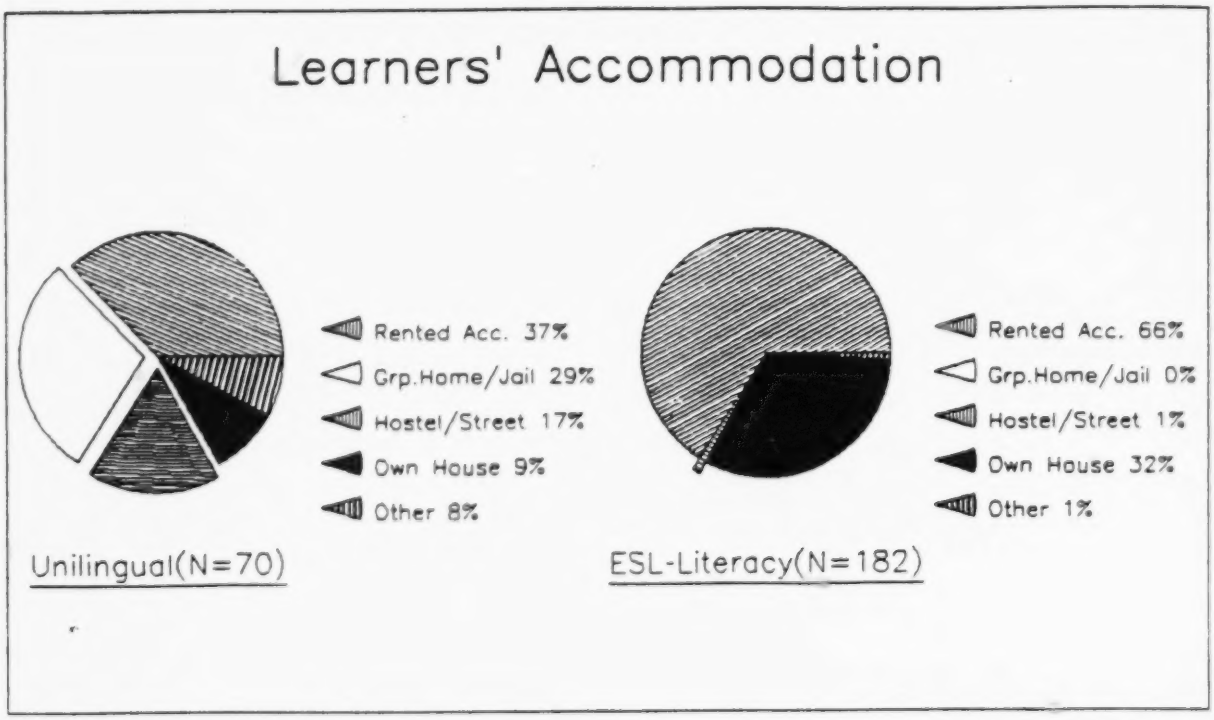
Figure 30



The occupational distributions of the learners' children who are not attending school are summarized in Figure 30. While there are too few children of unilingual learners to analyze with any degree of confidence, clearly the children of ESL-literacy learners hold better paying jobs than their parents. (See Figures 24 and 26.) For example, more than a quarter of the children have high socio-economic status (SES) jobs while very few of their parents hold similar positions. Similarly, very few (10%) children fall into the Non-Remunerative category (eg. housewife, unemployment insurance recipient, retiree and student); 49% of their learner-parents were so-classified. See Appendix G for a detailed summary.

Housing (Figure 31)

Figure 31

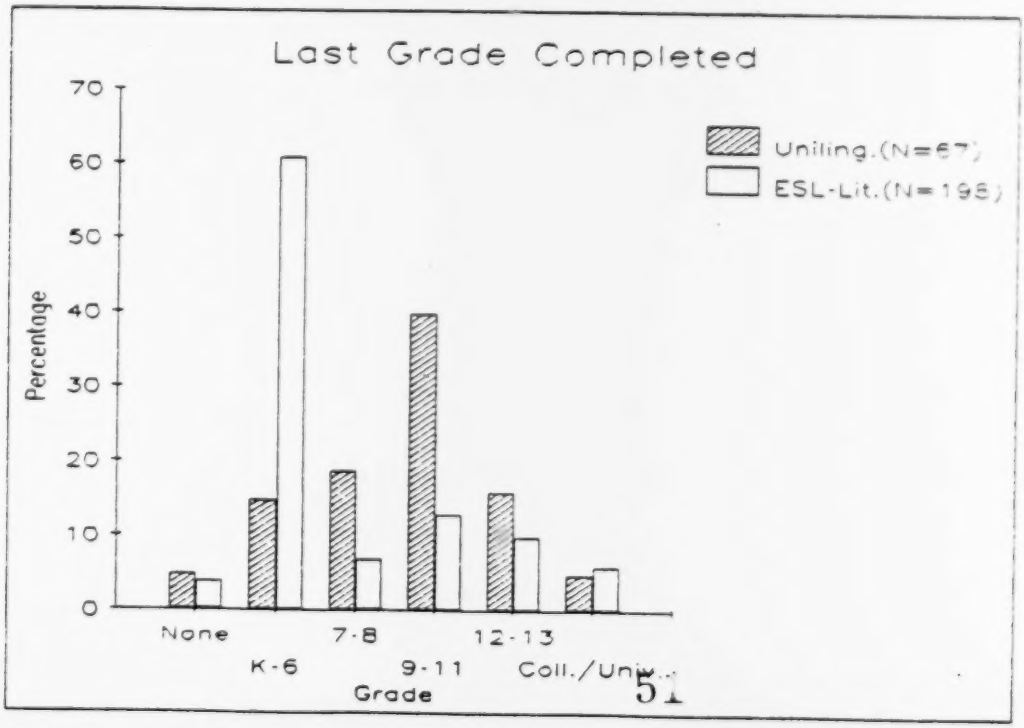


Previous Education (Figure 32-36)

Somewhat unexpectedly, Figure 32 shows that 61% of the unilingual learners have at least a grade 9 education, the UNESCO convention commonly used to identify or estimate literate populations. This supports the learners' self appraisals of reading and writing fluency and our observations of learners. Some learners have completed at least one year of college or university. These learners are literate but have returned to class for specific upgrading requirements, often a prerequisite to a more advanced program or job training course. Conversely, 20% of the unilingual learners did not complete junior high school.

Figure 32 also shows that while a few (6) ESL-literacy learners had attended college or university, the majority (65%) did not go beyond grade 6. Nevertheless, observations and interviews indicate that many of these learners are literate in their mother tongue.

Figure 32



There are also significant differences between the two groups in terms of how long they have been out of school. (See Figure 33.) The ESL-literacy learners have been out of school for longer periods of time than their unilingual counterparts. For the learners who have been out of school for twenty or more years and especially for many ESL-literacy learners who attended only elementary school in other parts of the world, the return to school is accompanied by considerable psychological effort and culture shock.

There are some dramatic differences between the two groups of learners regarding the reasons why they interrupted their education- for many, at a very young age. The response given most frequently by unilingual learners was a personal one, eg. they were not interested, they were failing, they did not like other students or teachers or were too old to continue in school at the time they dropped out. (See Figure 34.) For ESL-literacy learners, the most prevalent response was a cultural one; that they were not allowed or expected to go to school beyond a very early grade, often grade 4 or 6. Relatively large proportions of learners met their educational goals at the time they dropped out, but now feel the need to upgrade basic language (and in some cases, mathematics) skills. Relatively equal proportions of learners quit school because they wanted or had to work.

Figure 33

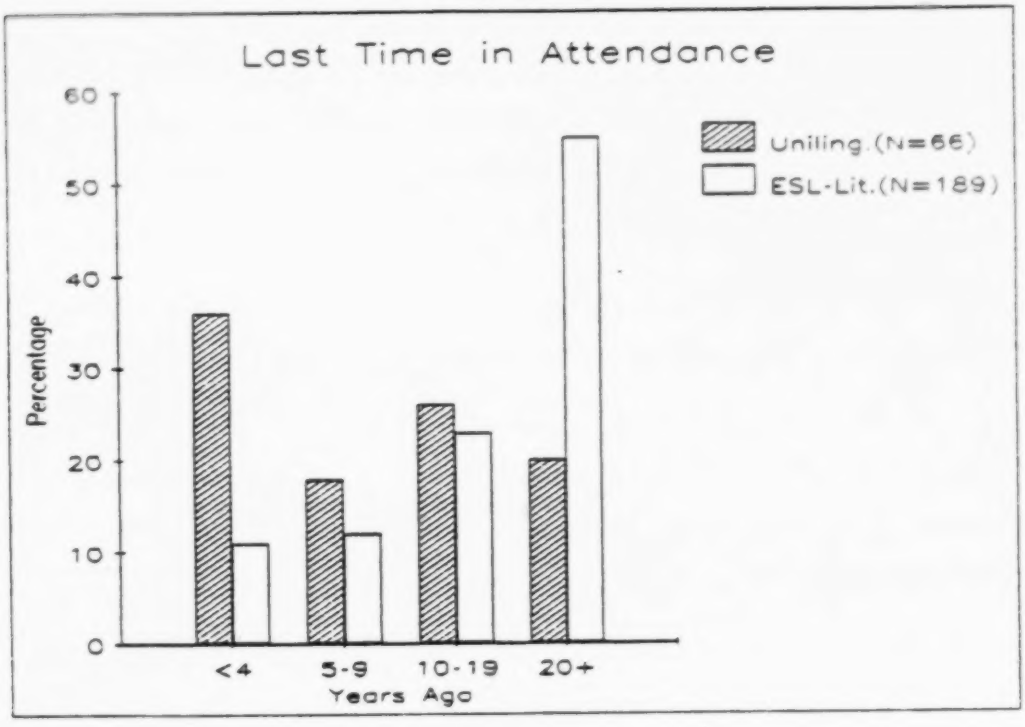


Figure 34

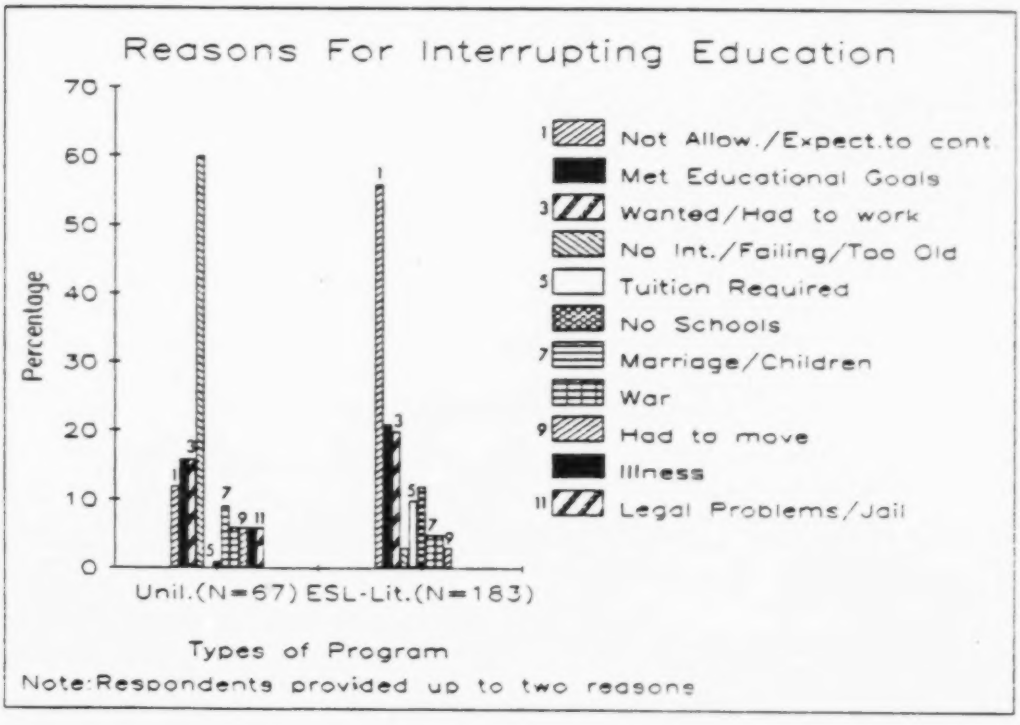


Figure 35

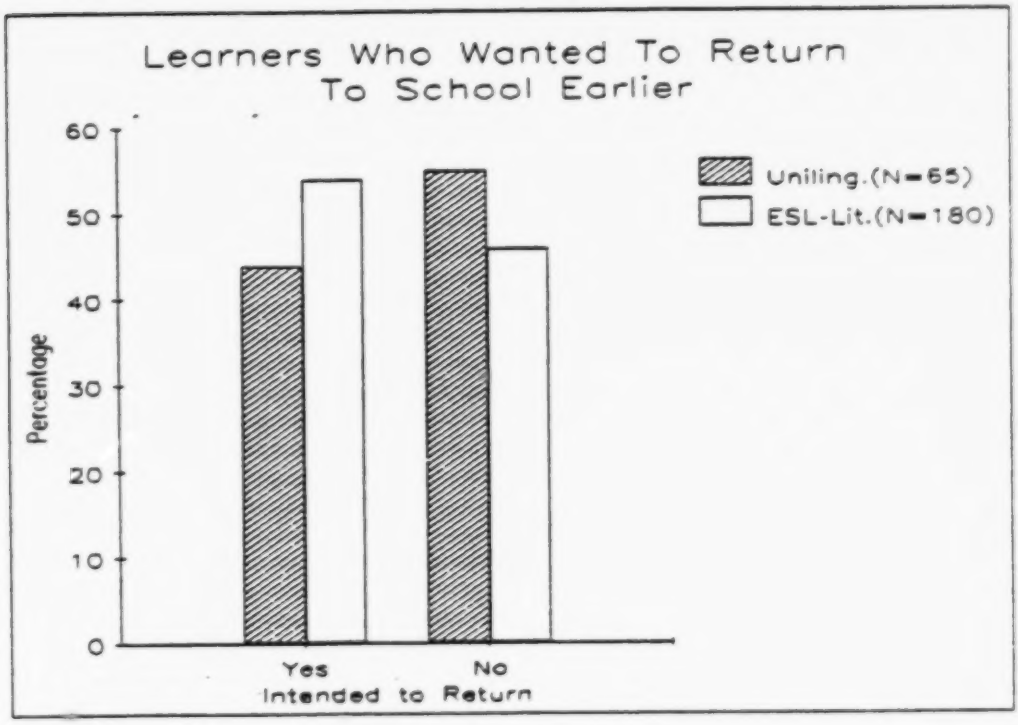
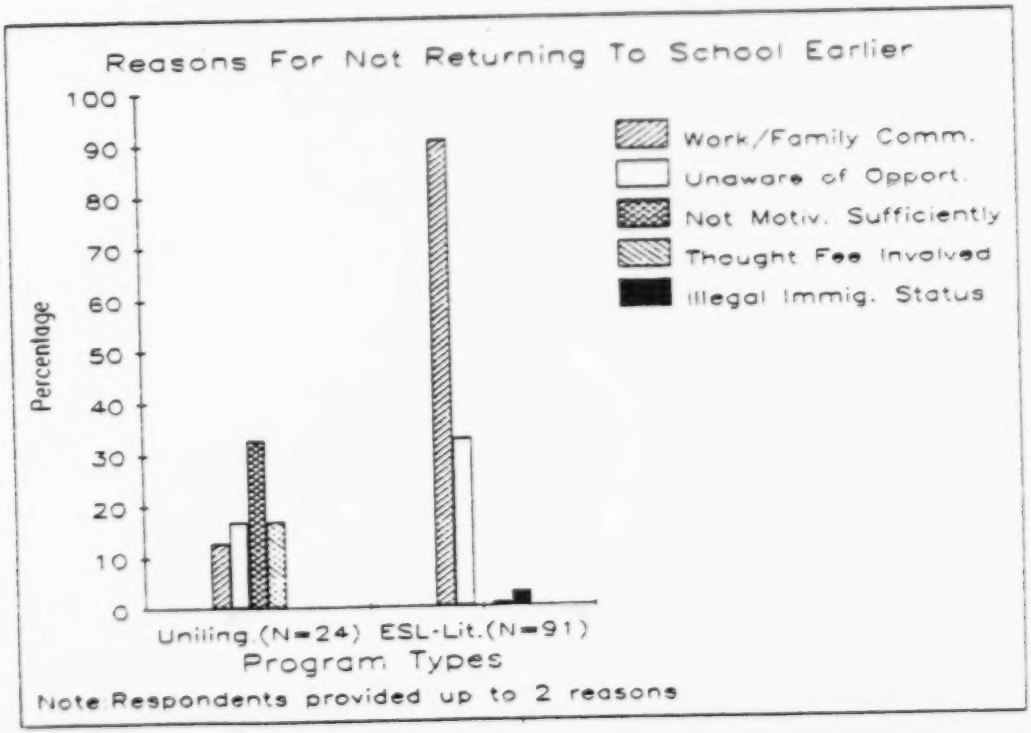


Figure 36

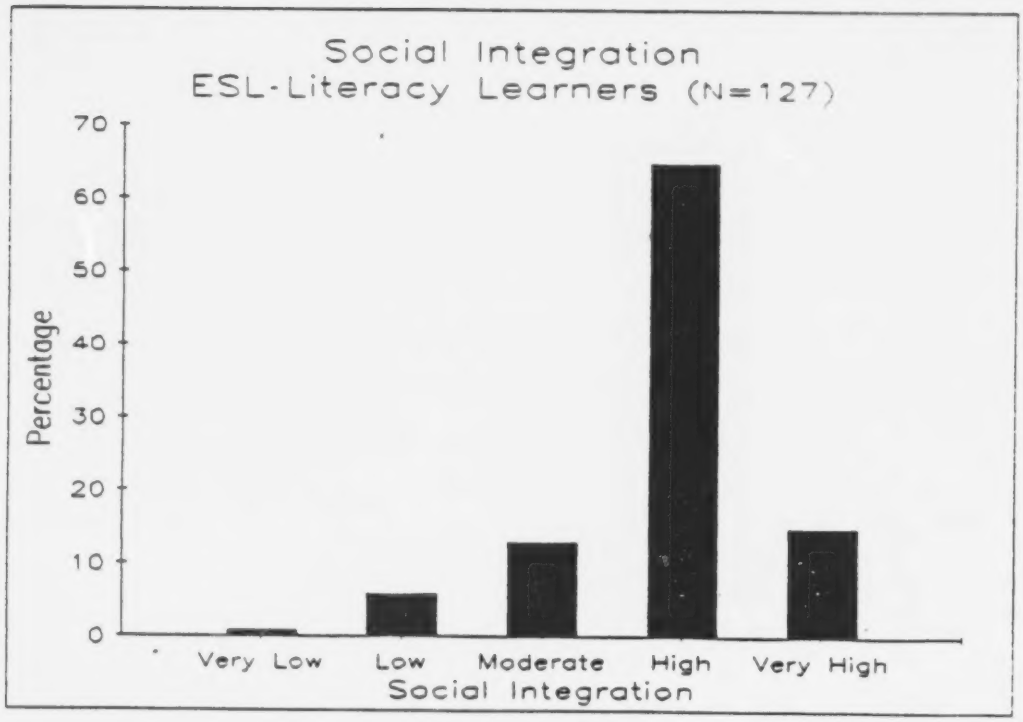


Social Integration (Figure 37)

A social integration scale was constructed for the ESL-literacy learners from nine variables related to some aspect of acculturation, eg. shopping behavior, friendships, language of recreational reading, degree of difficulties encountered in everyday activities because of language limitations, possession of a driver's licence, etc. In addition to measuring the learner's integration into the everyday culture of Toronto, it is also an indication of self-confidence and comfort in what is for most, a different culture.

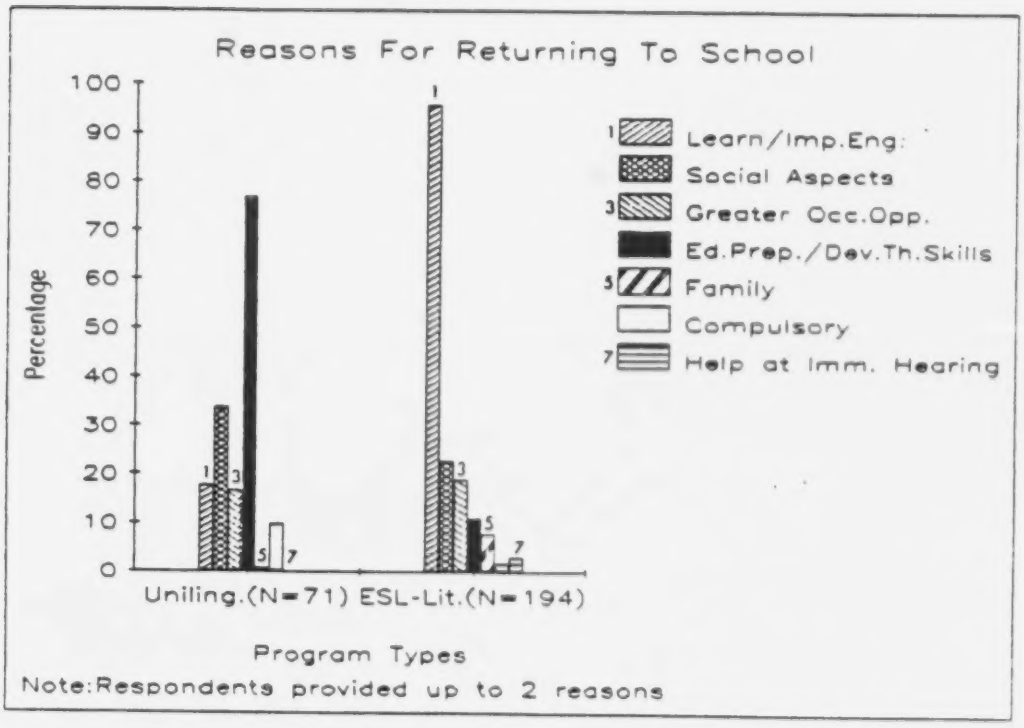
Collapsing the scale into five ranked categories produces the distribution summarized in Figure 37. Clearly, the majority of ESL-literacy learners are relatively well integrated into Toronto society. They shop in stores where English is the language of business; they drive; they read English language newspapers, magazines and books; they have English-speaking friends and they do not encounter any serious problems doing their banking, visiting the doctor, etc. In fact, the data suggest that there comes a point in a learner's increasing social integration into the community that allows him/her to make the decision to return to school; similarly, the data suggest that before this threshold in social integration is reached, learners will not (and likely, cannot) return to school.

Figure 37


Social Integration
ESL-Literacy Learners (N=127)
Percentage
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Very Low
Low
Moderate
High
Very High
Social Integration

Reasons for Returning to School and Aspirations (Figure 38-40)

Figure 38



When asked what they wanted to be doing five years in the future, 48% of the unilingual learners said they wanted to have a job. Another 42% of the unilingual group wanted to find better jobs or start their own businesses. (See Figure 39.) Among ESL-learners, the most frequently mentioned goals were to remain in Canada (46%) and raise families (43%). Job-related goals were mentioned often; 34% wanted better jobs or to start their own businesses, 22% wanted to find jobs, 7% expected to be working at their present jobs.

How Learners Find Out About Classes (Figure 41)

When potential learners become ready to return to school, they must have information available to them regarding educational opportunities for adults. Figure 41 lists the ways in which this information reaches learners. Clearly, many (66%) of the unilingual learners received this information through a largely institutional network of agency referrals, teachers and outreach workers. In many of these cases, the learners would be clients of these institutions. On the other hand, social networks play a more prominent role in the dissemination of this kind of information among ESL-literacy learners. More than half (55%) heard of their classes from friends, relatives or immediate family (children or spouse). However, about a third of the ESL-literacy learners also received their information through the institutional network of agency referrals, teachers or outreach workers.

Figure 39

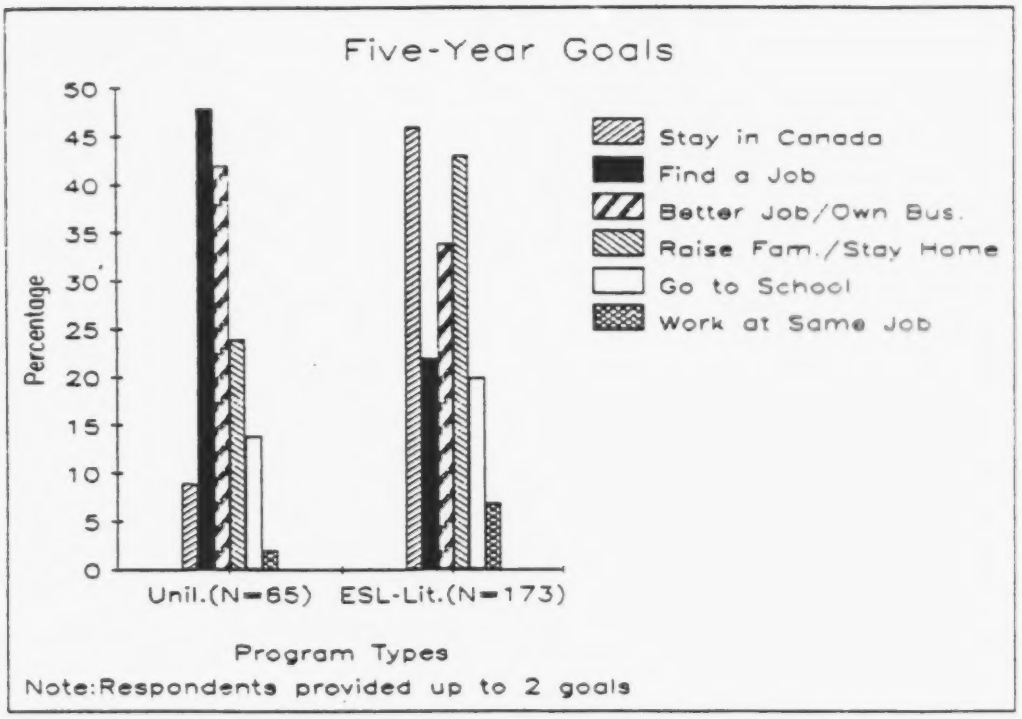


Figure 40

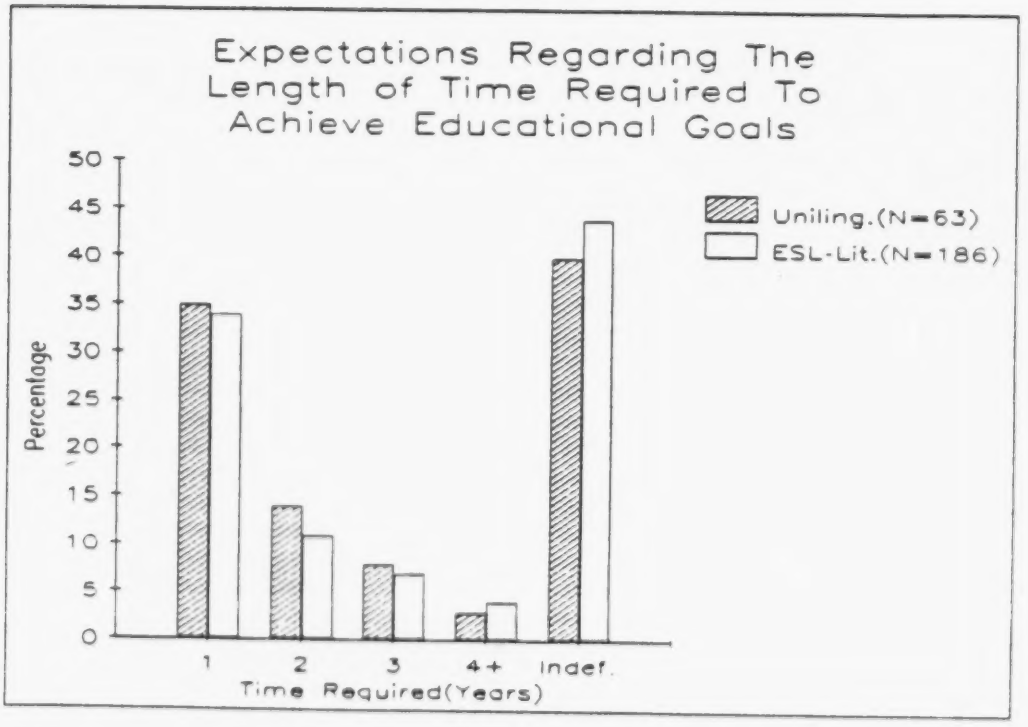
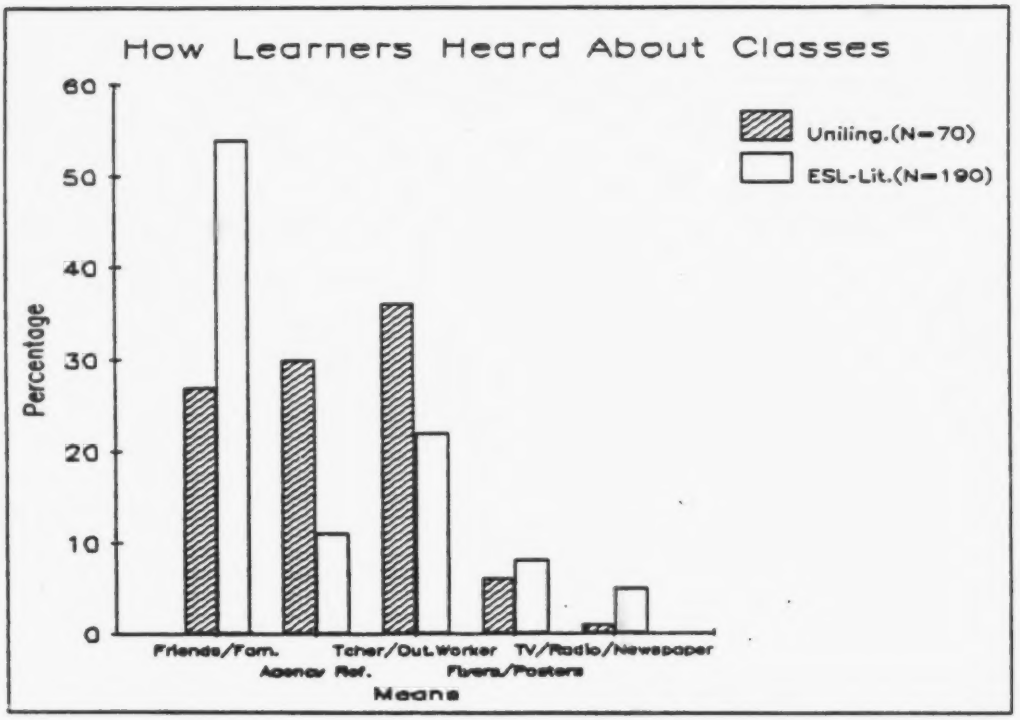
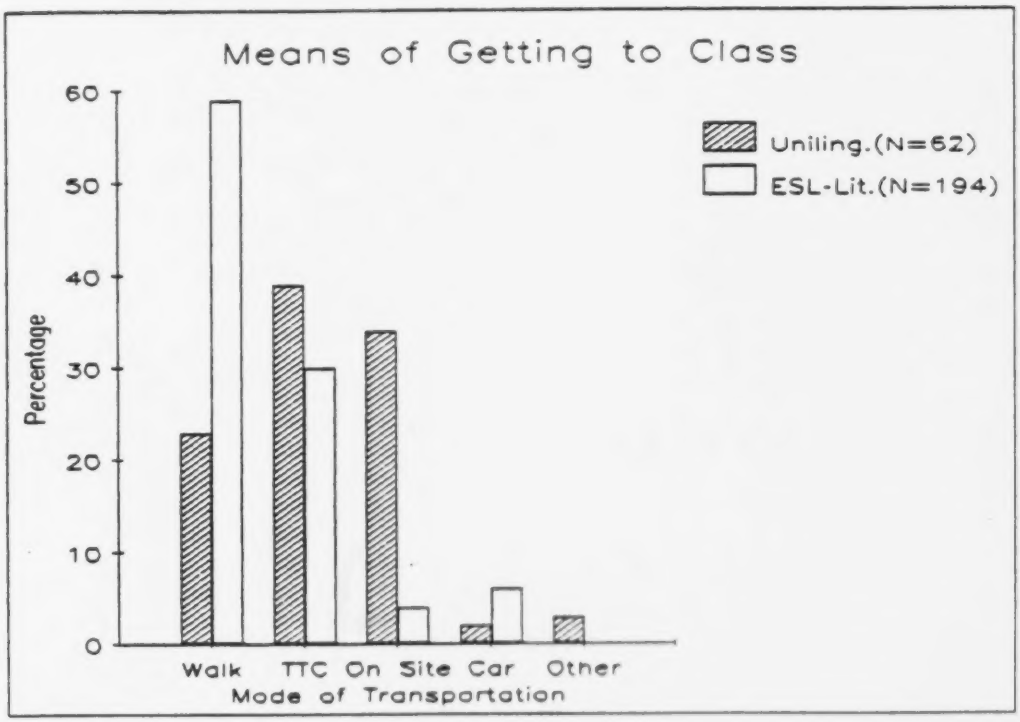


Figure 41


How Learners Heard About Classes
Uniling.(N=70)
ESL-Lit.(N=190)
Percentage
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Friends/Fam.
Agency
Tcher/Out.
Ref.
Worker
Flyers/Posters
TV/Radio/Newspaper
Means

Getting to Class (Figure 42)

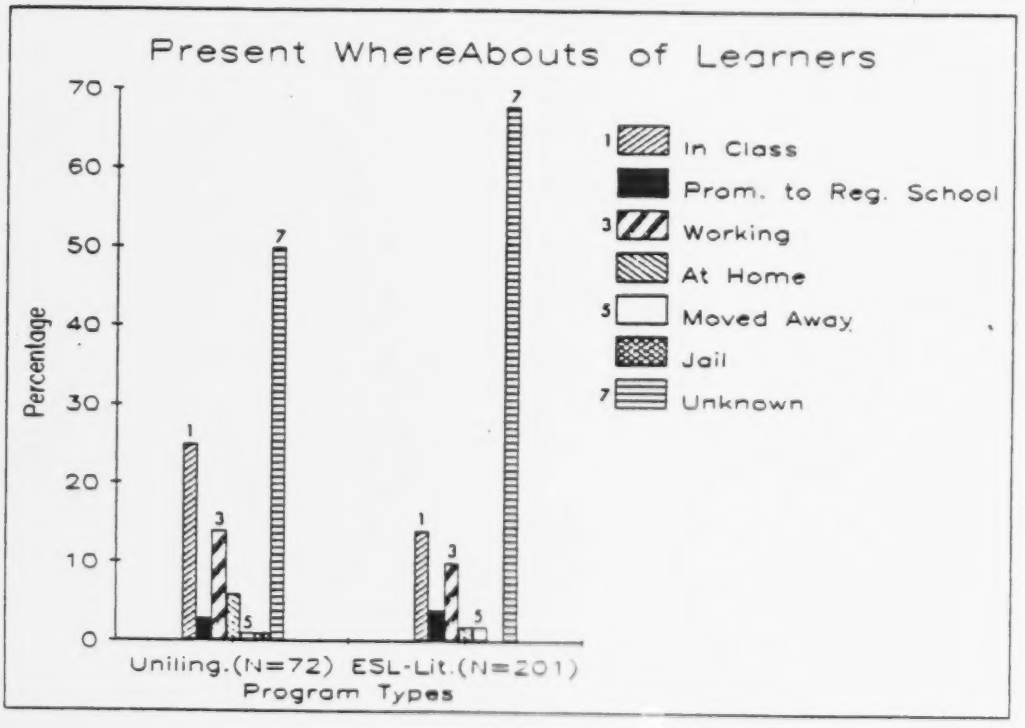
Figure 42



Present Whereabouts of Learners (Figure 43)

A year to a year and a half after learners were first interviewed for the study, lists of learners' names were sent to instructors asking them if they knew where the learners were and what they were doing. The returns are summarized in Figure 43.

Figure 43



5 THE INSTRUCTORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF

A. The Instructors

Summary (Table 5)

The range of qualifications, years of experience, curriculum, materials used, instructional styles, professional goals, etc. varies considerably from one instructor to the next. This section provides comprehensive profiles of the instructors of both the unilingual and the ESL-literacy learners.

Summaries of the two groups of instructors reveal both the similarities and differences between the two. (See Table 5.) For example, unilingual program instructors tend to be male and well-qualified with at least ten years of teaching experience. Although most have received inservice training, the most frequently requested inservice workshop topic is on new curriculum ideas. These instructors have a wide range of professional goals but the majority believe that their goals cannot be achieved within the Board due to a lack of career opportunities and staff development. Teaching does not affect their lives adversely (eg. stress or late hours), and most derive their greatest satisfaction from their students' progress. Their greatest frustrations stem from a lack of materials and of recognition. In addition, about two-thirds of the unilingual group's instructors report working more hours than they are paid

for. (It should be noted that Board policy stipulates that instructors are paid only for the hours that their classes are in session.) Shared classroom space presents problems (mainly a lack of lockable storage space) but also offers advantages such as other on-site services often helpful to learners. The most requested improvements are an increased supply budget, better hours (i.e. time of day, which is usually established with input from the learners), and better facilities. Almost half make referrals for their students, usually to other more appropriate classes. Few do outreach for their programs. Their teaching is usually done to groups of less than ten. Most do assessments of learners and monitor their progress. They tend to rely on published learning materials. Most feel that they have sufficient contact with their lead instructors.

ESL-literacy instructors are almost always female, well-qualified but with less experience than the unilingual instructors. Like them, most have had inservice training but still request workshops on new curriculum ideas. Similarly, they have a wide range of professional goals, but differ in that many want to further their formal training. About half feel that their goals cannot be met within the Board. Most instructors stated that their lives are not affected adversely in any way because of teaching and that they experience their greatest satisfaction from their students' progress. Sources of frustration are the lack of materials, continuous enrollment necessitating constant

review for the class, and the high drop out rate. Almost all the ESL-literacy instructors claimed to work more hours than they were paid for. ESL-literacy instructors experienced more problems with shared classroom space (often in elementary schools), e.g. lack of lockable storage space, noise/interruptions, limited display space for students' work and child-sized furniture. The main advantages to sharing space are the other services (including childcare) which are often on-site and the availability of equipment and materials. The most requested improvements were an increased supply budget, better hours (ie. time of day which is usually determined with input from learners) and the elimination of continuous enrollment. Most ESL-Literacy instructors make referrals for students, usually to other classes. About half do some form of outreach for their programs. Their classes tend to be larger than unilingual groups. Most do informal assessments and monitoring of learners. English is the language of instruction at least 50% of the time in all classes. They use both their own materials and published materials. Most felt the amount of contact with their lead instructors is sufficient.

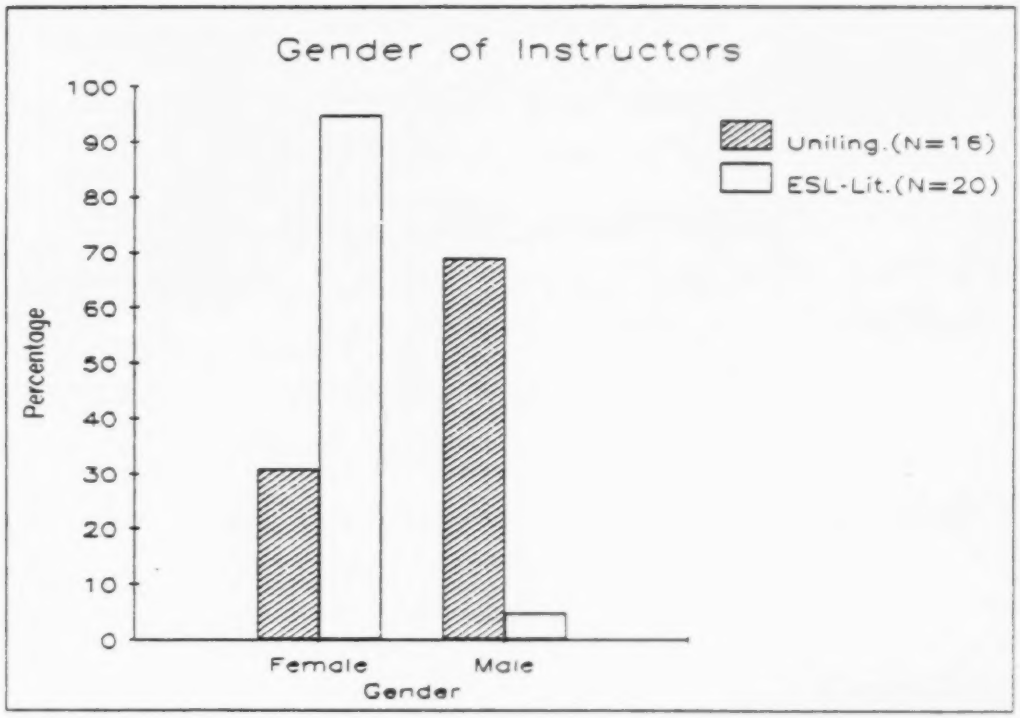
TABLE 5

INSTRUCTOR PROFILES

Unilingual (N=16)	ESL-Literacy (N=20)
male (69%)	female (95%)
> 10 years teaching experience (54%)	< 5 years teaching experience (65%)
79% have had inservice training	79% have had inservice training
67% want additional inservice in curriculum ideas	80% want additional inservice in curriculum ideas and teaching in a bilingual/multilingual environment (47%)
63% feel professional aspirations cannot be fulfilled at the Board	47% feel professional aspirations cannot be fulfilled at the Board
most instructor's lives not adversely affected by teaching	most instructor's lives not adversely affected by by teaching
most derive enjoyment from seeing learner's progress (77%)	most derive enjoyment from seeing learner's progress (88%)
31% frustrated by lack of material/supplies; 23% by lack of recognition	42% frustrated by lack of materials/supplies; 31% by continuous enrollment and 25% by drop out rate
64% claim to work more hours than paid for	95% claim to work more hours than paid for
36% have storage problems in shared facilities	56% have storage problems in shared facilities, 33% experience noise and interruptions
85% find other on-site services useful	55% find other on-site services useful
45% want better facilities and co-operation from host; 36% want bigger supply budget and 36% want better hours	50% want bigger supply budget
47% make referrals, usually to other classes	72% make referrals, usually to other classes
29% do outreach	47% do outreach
71% teach groups of fewer than 10 learners, some 1:1	61% teach groups of more than 10 learners, none 1:1
81% do initial assessments; 46% formally	70% do initial assessments; 21% formally
87% monitor learners' progress; 64% formally	80% monitor learners' progress; 25% formally
rely on published materials (eg. East End Literacy's, The New Start Reading Series) and items from other sources (eg. newspaper, job application form)	rely on own materials (eg. flash cards) and published items (eg. Ministry of Citizenship Culture's "Welcome to Canadian English")
85% have sufficient contact with their lead instructor	73% have sufficient contact with their lead instructor

Gender (Figure 44)

Figure 44



Teaching and Related Experience (Figure 45-46)

Figure 45

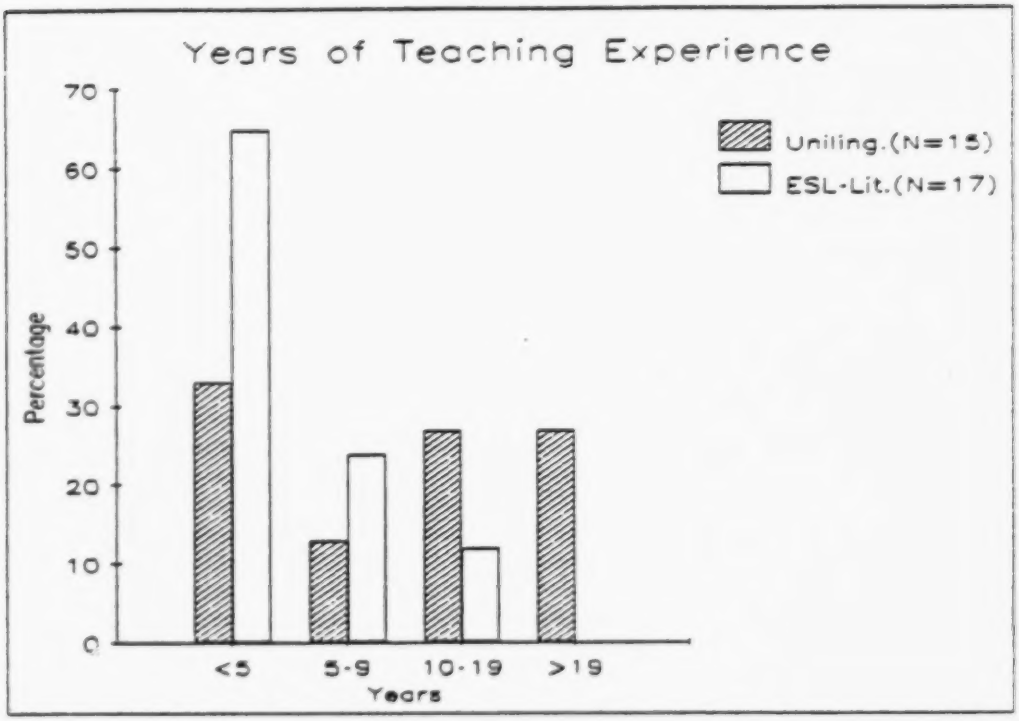
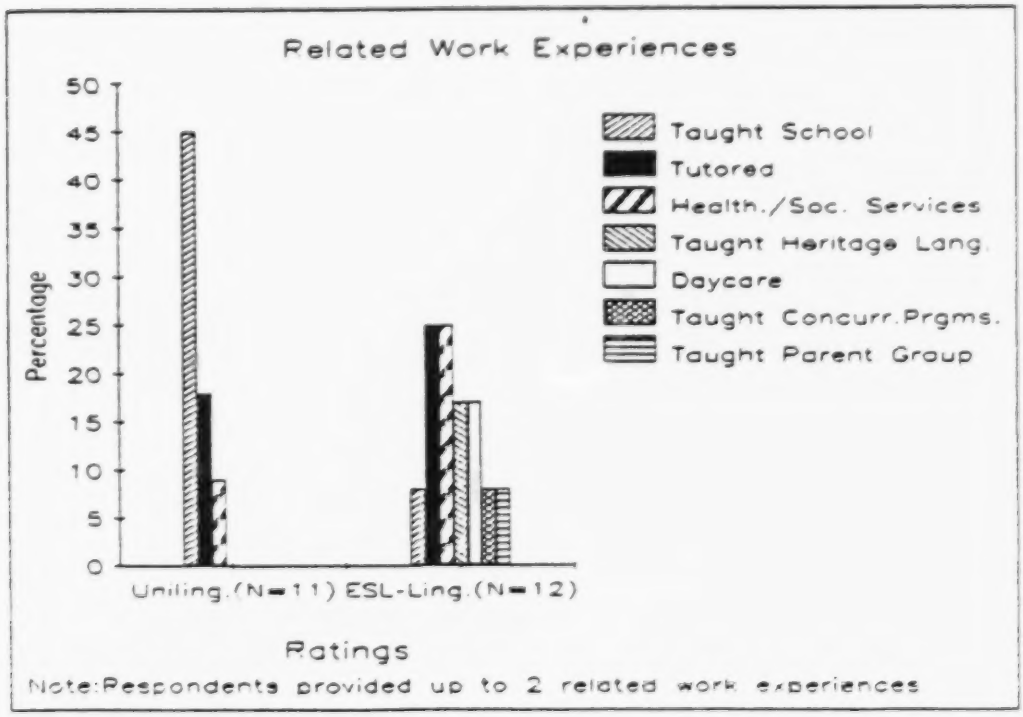
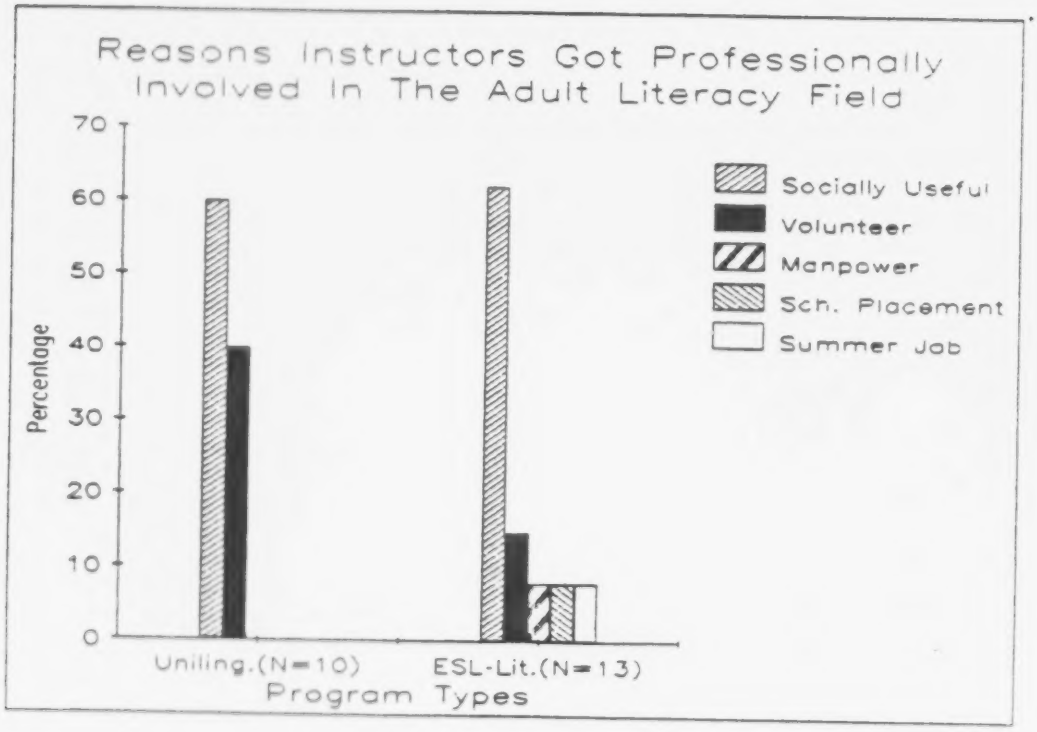


Figure 46



Entry Into the Field (Figure 47)

Figure 47



Teaching Qualifications and Training (Figures 48-51)

Note that the Ministry of Education classifies ESL-literacy programs as General Interest (ie. non-credit) courses. As such, instructors do not require an Ontario Teaching Certificate.

Figure 48

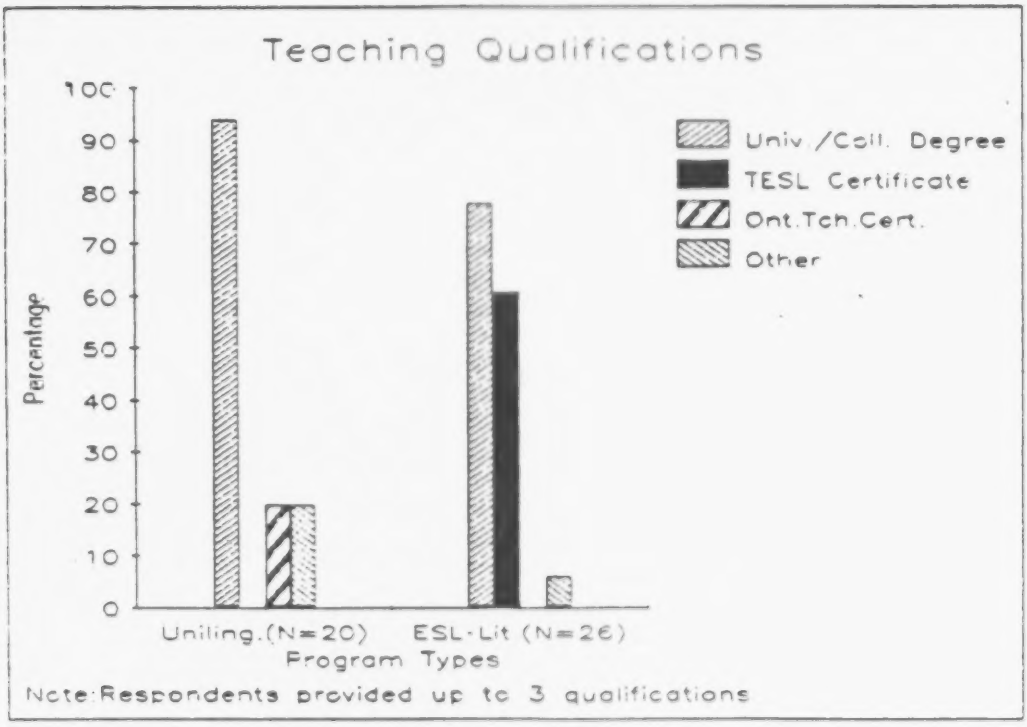


Figure 49

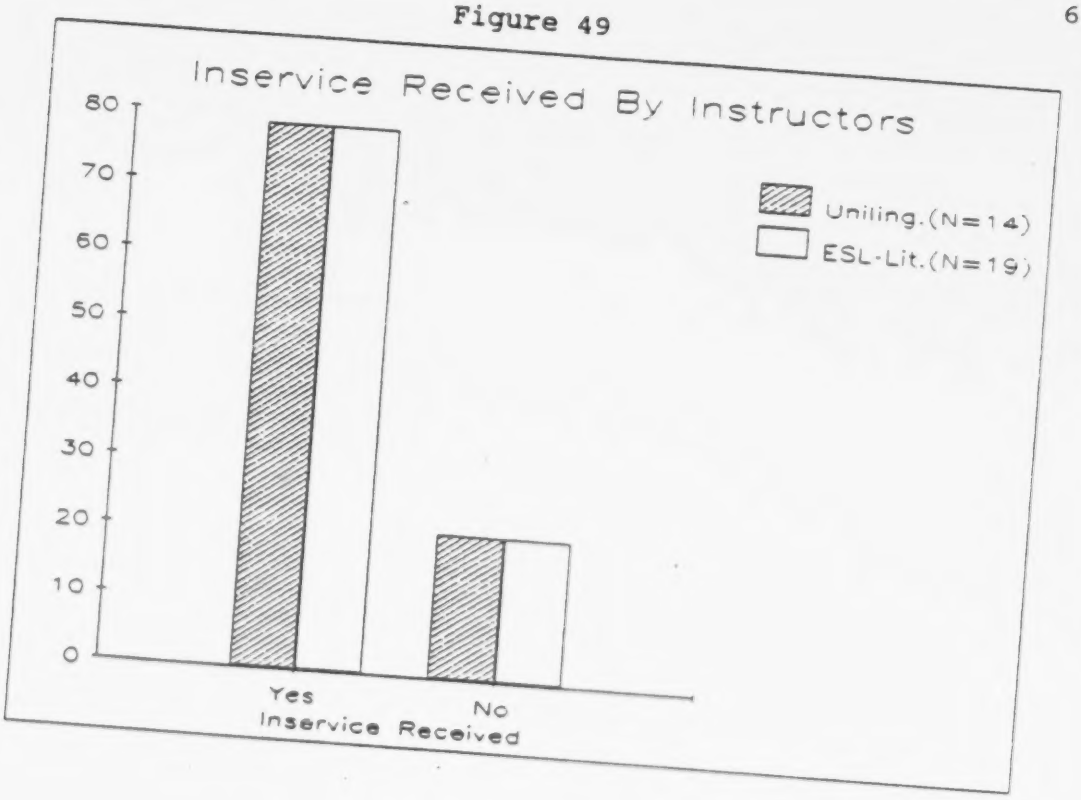


Figure 50

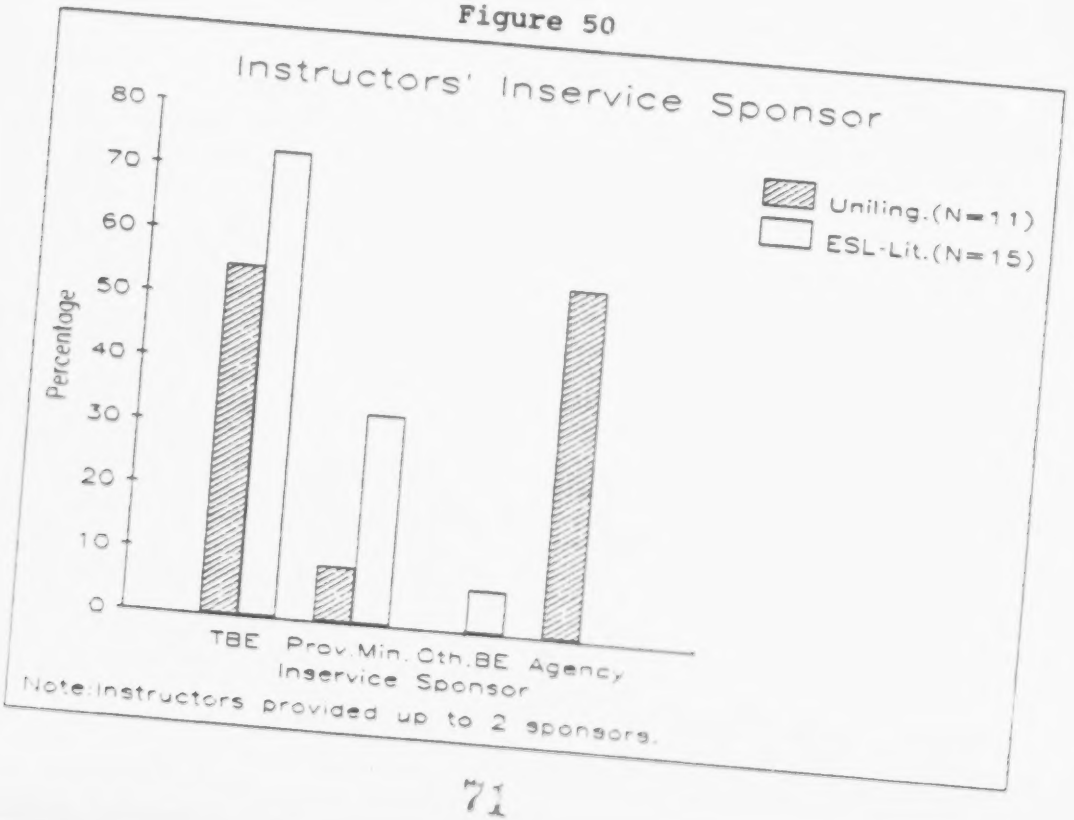
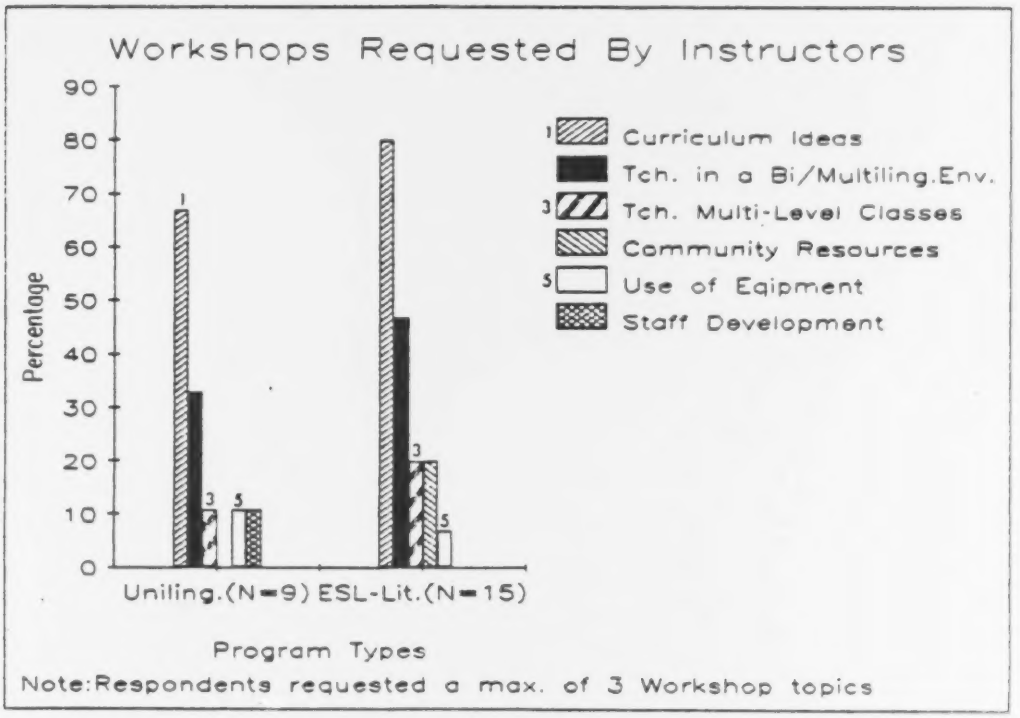


Figure 51


Workshops Requested By Instructors
Percentage
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1
3
5
1 Curriculum Ideas
Tch. in a Bi/Multiling.Env.
3 Tch. Multi-Level Classes
Community Resources
5 Use of Eqipment
Staff Development
Uniling.(N=9)
ESL-Lit.(N=15)
Program Types
Note:Respondents requested a max. of 3 Workshop topics

Professional Goals (Figures 52-53)

Figure 52

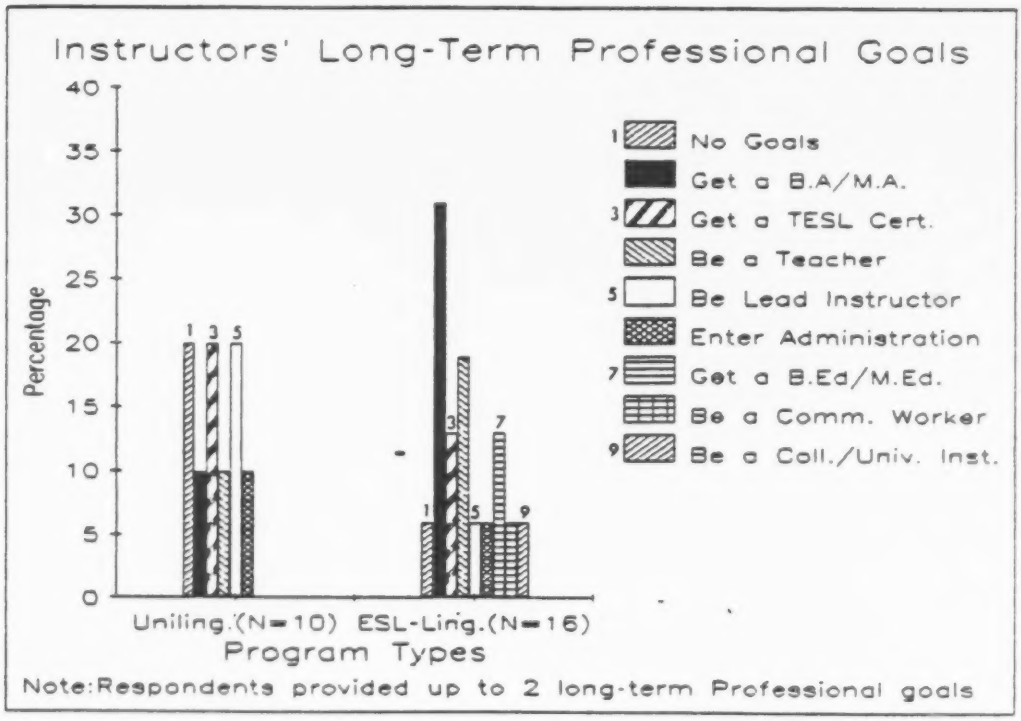
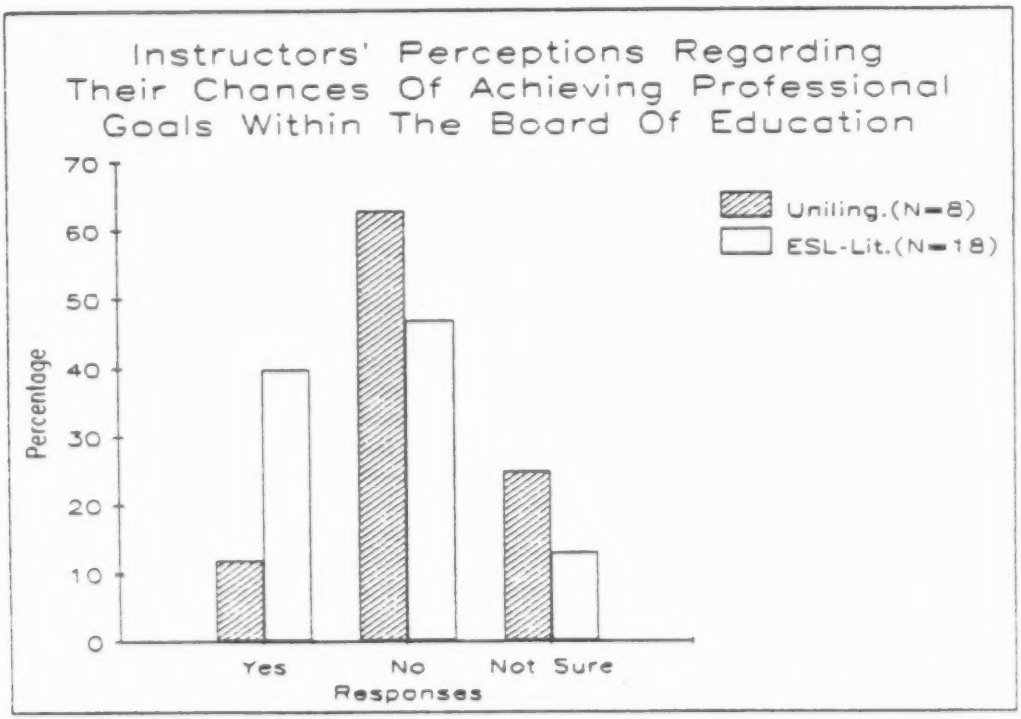


Figure 53



Effects of Teaching on Instructors (Figures 54-56)

Because of the nature of teaching literacy classes, eg. split shifts where an instructor might teach a morning and evening class, late and weekend hours, enrollment-based continuation of classes, etc. instructors were asked if their jobs had adversely affected their personal lives. Most instructors replied in the negative, ie. no adverse effects were felt.

Figure 54

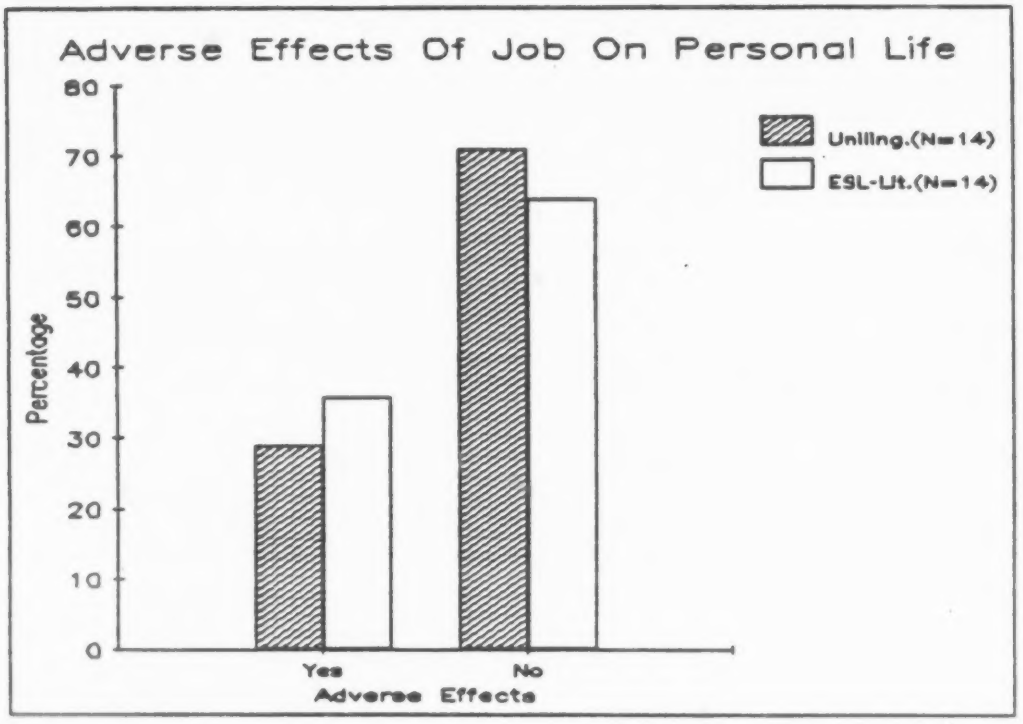


Figure 55

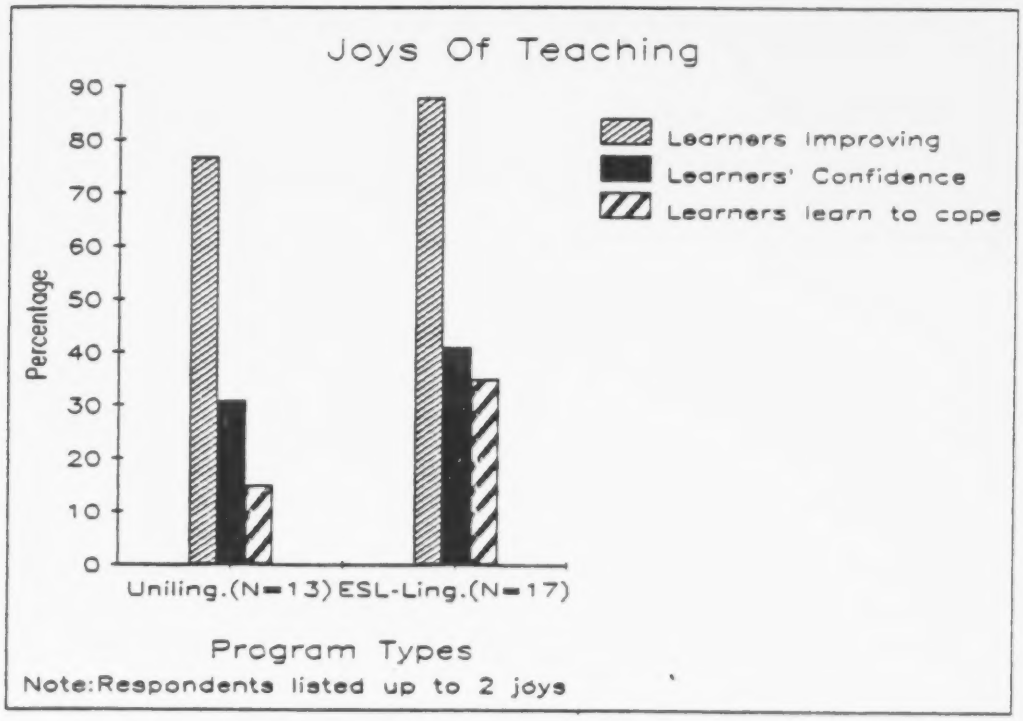
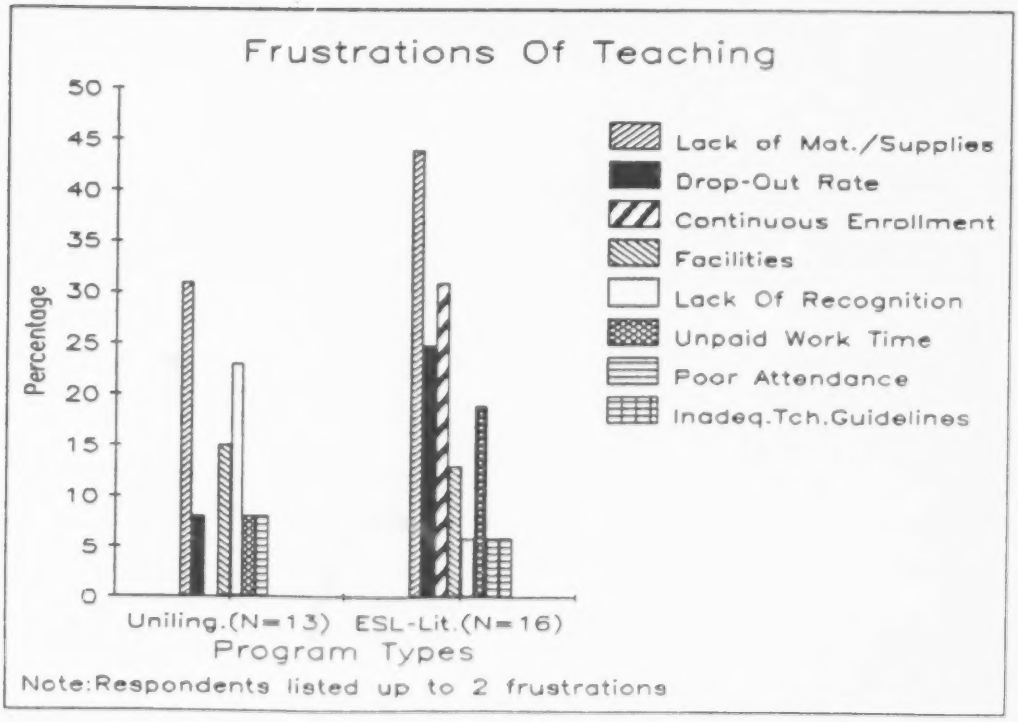


Figure 56



Shared Space (Figure 57-58)

Figure 57

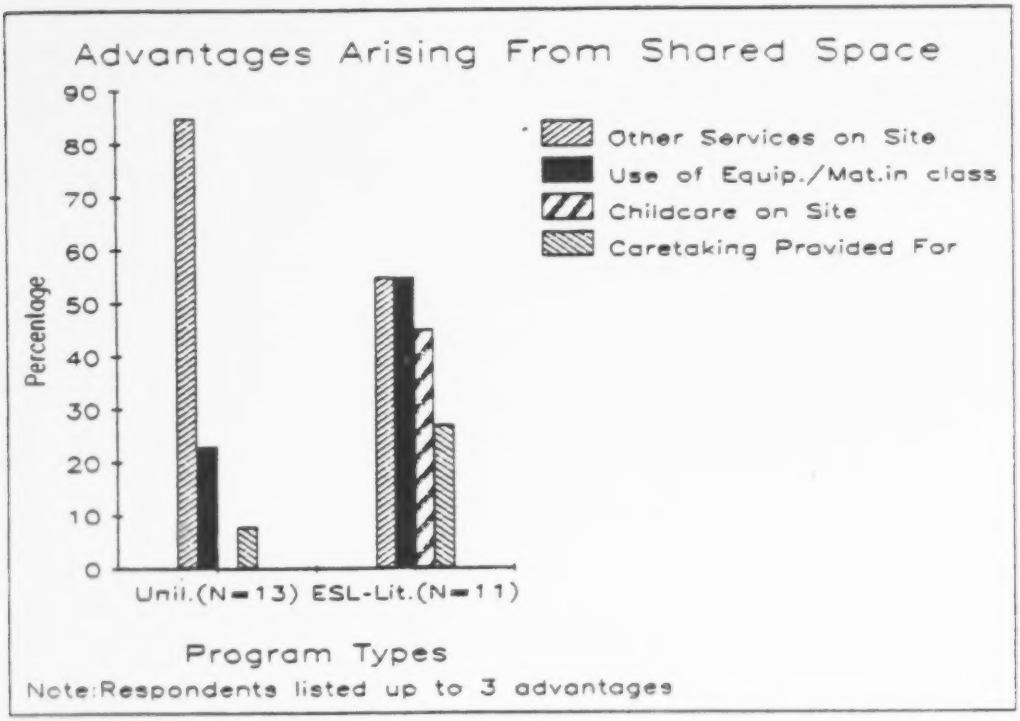
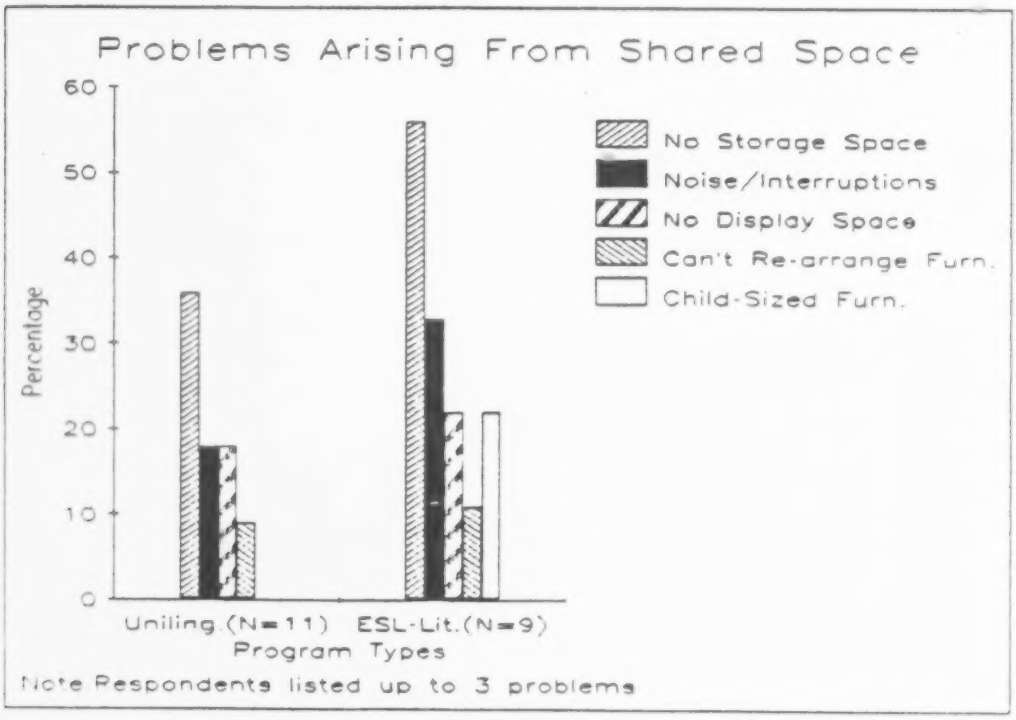
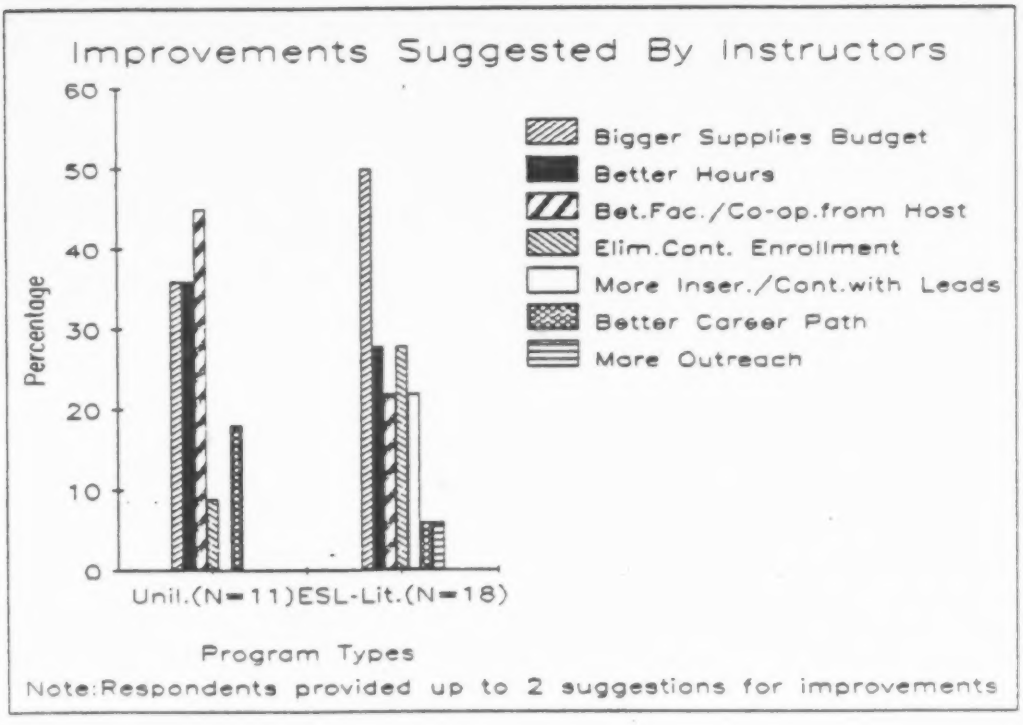


Figure 58



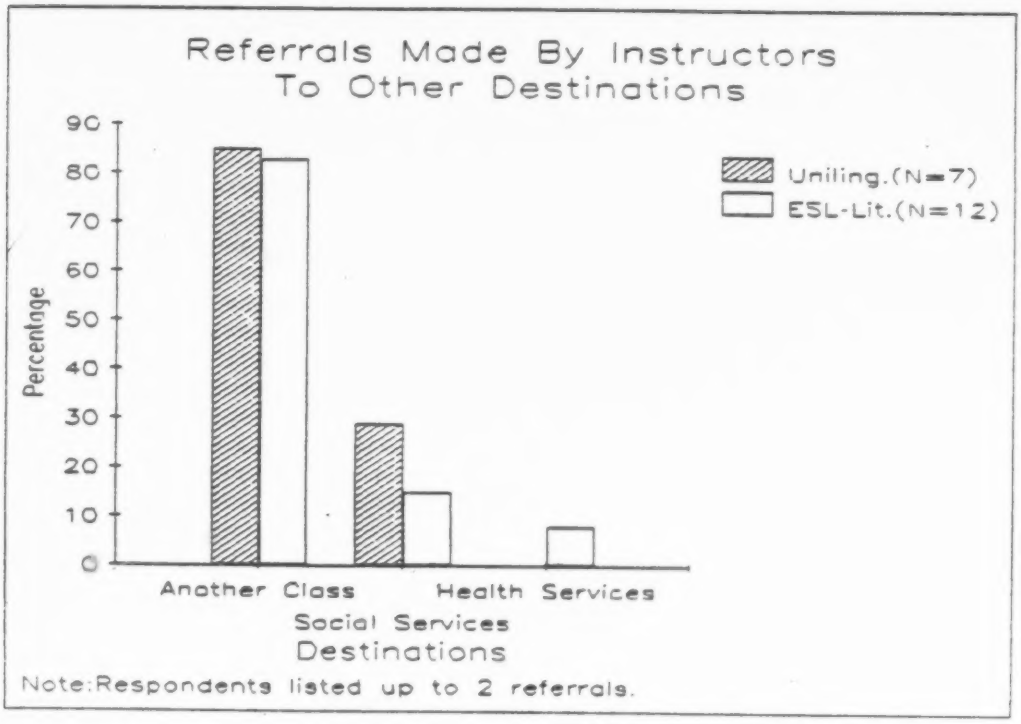
Suggestions for Improvements (Figure 59)

Figure 59



Referrals and Outreach (Figure 60)

Figure 60



Assessment and Monitoring of Learners' Progress (Figures 61-64)

Figure 61

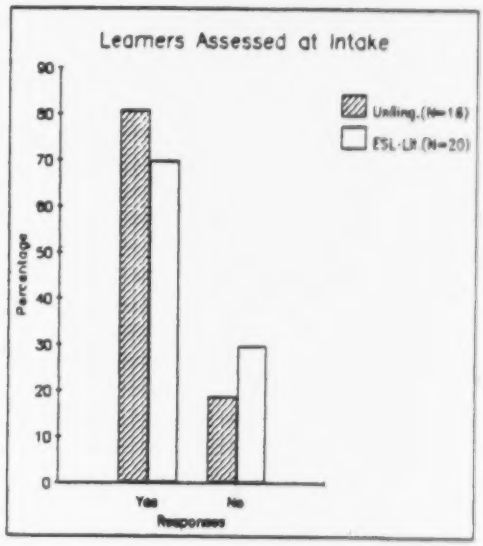


Figure 62

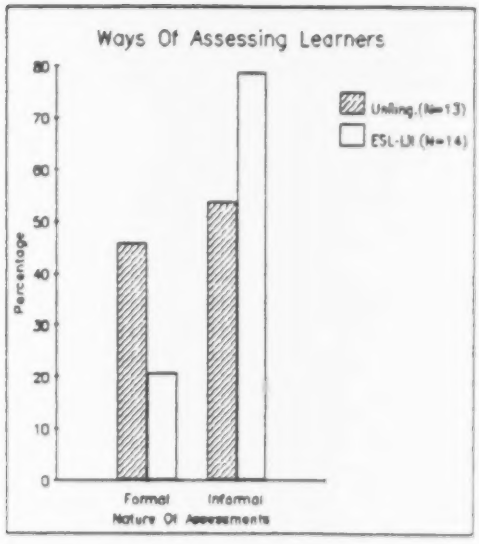


Figure 63

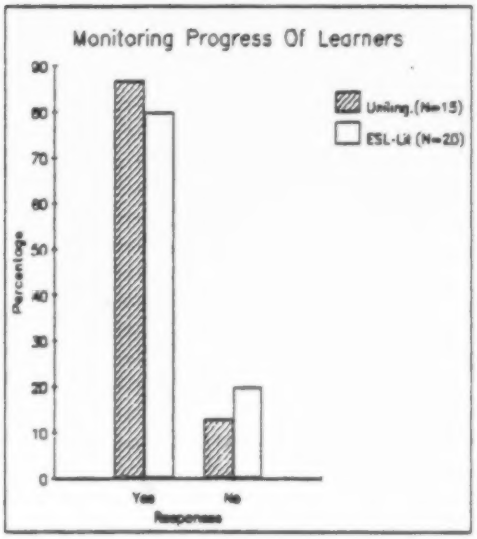
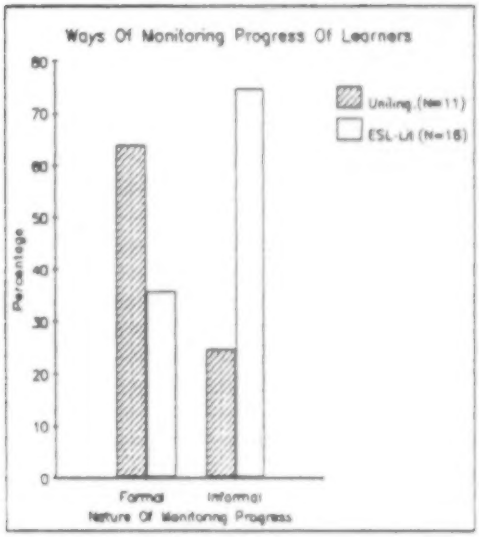


Figure 64



Contact with Lead Instructors/Principals (Figures 65-66)

Figure 65

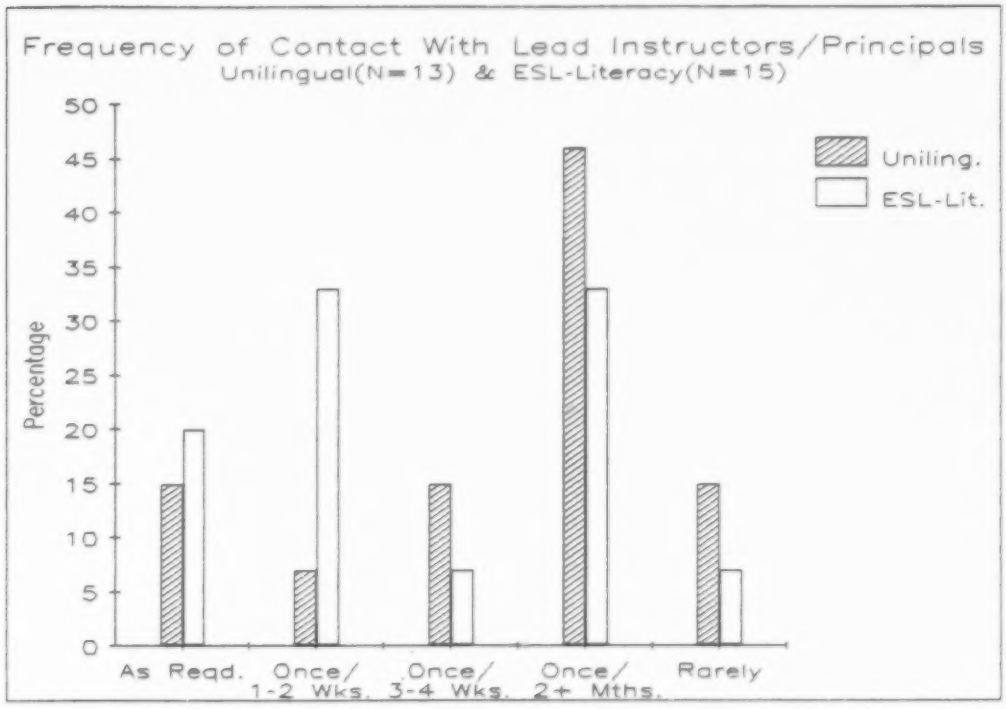
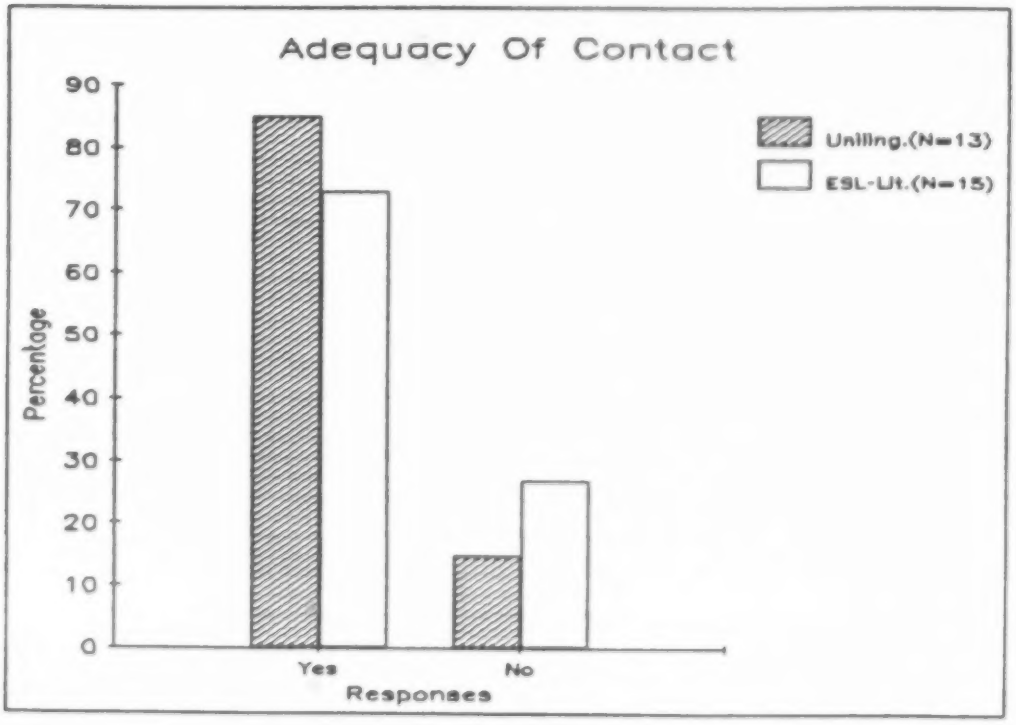


Figure 66



Languages of Instruction and Sources of Instructional Materials (Tables 6 and 7)

Seven languages of instruction were observed in the (bilingual) ESL-literacy classes. Usually English and a mother tongue are used in class. Their frequency of use varies as shown in Table 6. Three instructors used English exclusively; three more used it at least 80% of the time. In all classes, English was the language of instruction at least 50% of the time. Continuous attempts were made by instructors to limit and reduce the amount of first language use in class.

TABLE 6

LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION AND THEIR FREQUENCY OF USE - ESL-LITERACY INSTRUCTORS

Frequency of Use	Language of Instruction						
	Eng. N	Chinese N	Greek N	Hindi N	Punjabi N	Portuguese N	Spanish N
0 - 19%	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
20% - 39%	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
40% - 49%	0	0	1	1	0	3	0
50% - 59%	4	1	1	0	0	1	1
60% - 79%	5	1	1	0	0	2	0
80% - 99%	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
100%	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

Four teachers did not respond.

Note: Respondents provided up to three languages of instruction.

Instructors use learning materials from a variety of sources. Unilingual program instructors tend to rely more on commercially produced materials and items taken from other sources (eg. newspaper, job application forms, etc.). (See Table 7.) ESL-literacy instructors use more of their own materials (eg. flash cards, prepared dialogue, Language Master Tapes, etc.) and fewer published items (eg. Ministry of Citizenship and Culture's, Welcome to Canadian English).

TABLE 7

SOURCES AND PROPORTIONS OF LEARNING MATERIALS USED BY INSTRUCTORS

Proportions Used	Unilingual				ESL-Literacy			
	Tchr Made %	Stdnt Made %	Pub %	Other %	Tchr Made %	Stdnt Made %	Pub %	Other %
0	13	25	0	18	5	56	0	75
1% - 19%	33	25	14	9	5	13	21	8
20% - 39%	27	42	36	27	26	19	32	17
40% - 59%	13	0	14	18	26	13	21	0
60% - 79%	13	0	21	18	16	0	11	0
80% - 100%	0	8	14	9	21	0	16	0
Total (N of Respondents)	(15)	(12)	(14)	(11)	(19)	(16)	(19)	(12)

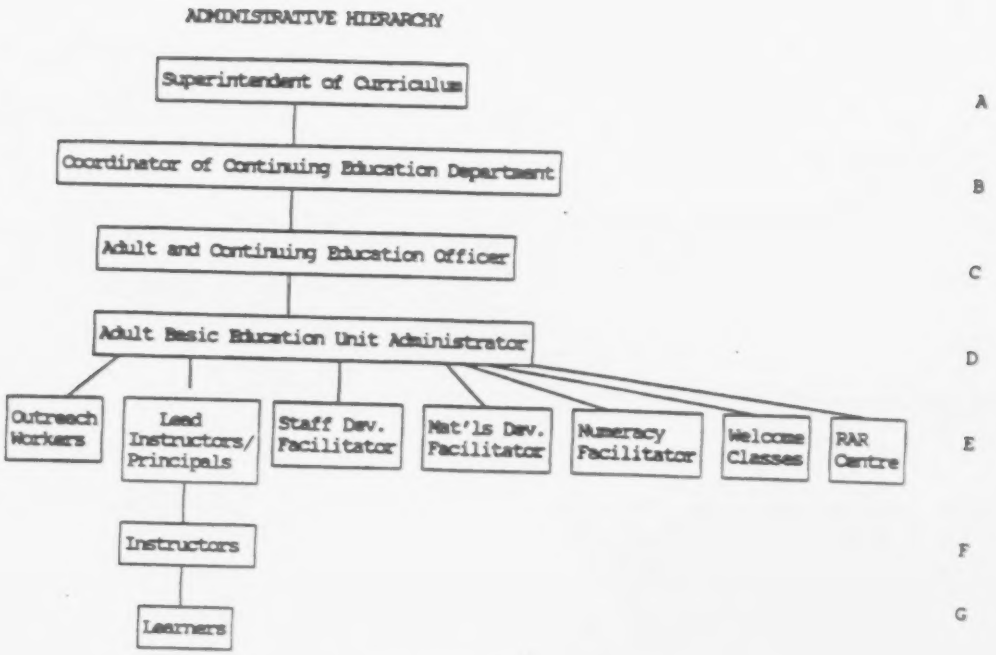
B. Administrative and Program Support

Summary

The six lead instructors and three school principals interviewed oversaw a total of 83 ESL-literacy and unilingual literacy classes. The Unit Administrator, Staff Development Facilitator, Materials Development Facilitator, Numeracy Facilitator, the Reception-Assessment-Referral Centre Facilitator, the Welcome Class Facilitator and Outreach Workers were also interviewed regarding their roles in the program delivery model. Except for the principals, all are staff of the Adult Basic Education Unit. Their relative positions in the organizational structure are shown in Figure 67.

There are two models of decentralized administration and support, depending primarily on where the programs are located. Where classes are situated in agencies, lead instructors provide both administrative and program support to instructors and liaison between agency staff and between the Board. In school-based programs, the principal assumes the administrative role of Supervisory Principal and a curriculum advisor (a lead instructor of the Adult Basic Education Unit) is assigned to the classes to provide curriculum and program support to instructors. This model takes into account the fact that principals do not have

Figure 67



Clerical staff omitted for clarity.
RAR-Reception-Assessment-Referral Centre.

sufficient time or expertise in adult ESL and/or literacy, to take on curriculum and program support responsibilities. (See Appendix H for a copy of the memorandum which every principal receives outlining the duties expected of him/her and the curriculum advisor.)

The Adult Basic Education Unit was established in 1986-87 within the Continuing Education Department to create new literacy classes and provide curriculum and program support to existing class.

In order to look more closely at the administrative structure, interviews were conducted with the staff involved directly or indirectly in literacy programs. This includes the following positions (ie. levels A-D in Figure 67):

- Superintendent of Curriculum (with responsibility for the Continuing Education Department)
- Co-ordinator of Continuing Education
- Adult and Continuing Education Officer
- Adult Basic Education Unit Administrator
- Assistant Co-ordinator, ESL, Language Study Centre*
- Adult ESL Administrative Resource Centre Leads (East and West)*

Several staff changes occurred during the study. Two different Superintendents had responsibility for the Continuing Education

* Not a part of the literacy structure.

Department during the course of the research; both were interviewed. A third Superintendent has now assumed this position as the study was completed. In addition, there was a change in the Adult Basic Education Unit Administrator.

As well, the curriculum support provided by the Language Study Centre was withdrawn so that the Assistant Co-ordinator, ESL could devote more time to day school programs and the implementation of the ESL Work Group report. These duties are now shared between the Administrative Leads of the ESL Resource Centres and the ABE Unit Staff. This team is supported by lead instructors and other staff as required.

(1) Community-Based Programs

In community-based programs, lead instructors work closely with community agencies, institutions and the instructors. In some programs such as the Toronto Jail and the Queen Street Mental Health Centre where the instructors' connections to the Board are relatively tenuous, the lead instructors may constitute their one concrete link to the Board. Lead instructors estimate that at least one-half of their time is taken up by administrative duties (arranging for classroom space, completing permits, collecting paysheets and attendance records from instructors, attending meetings, etc.) and the remainder by curriculum and program support. Their responsibilities include:

- assisting with registration, assessment and placement when requested; referrals for learners; outreach
- preparing pay sheets for instructors and monthly reports on each class and processing book and supply orders
- participating in setting up new programs, arranging for space permits and hiring instructors
- disseminating information
- liaising with community agencies and their staff and between isolated programs
- visiting each class about once each month and being in telephone contact more frequently in order to consult with instructors about curriculum, instructional methods and related issues; also, to monitor programs
- introducing new materials and resources; assisting the instructor in preparation and choice of materials; staff development and training
- attending meetings with Continuing Education and ABE Unit staff as required.
- special projects such as development of materials, photo displays, conferences, etc.

Lead instructors perceive their primary job to be curriculum leadership. Although the study found that most instructors were satisfied with the amount of support given to them by lead instructors, interviews with the leads and our own observations indicated that the potential for curriculum support was far greater than that being realized. The main obstacles to remedying this situation are the allocation of few lead instructors to many classes, many administrative responsibilities (usually to the Board but at times to agencies as well) and in some cases, being on-call for up to twelve hours a day even though efforts are made not to assign both day and night classes to one lead instructor.

Support to Instructors

Lead instructors (including curriculum advisors) are concerned about improving their support for instructors in the following areas:

- staff development
- improving quality of materials used in programs
- increasing enrollment where appropriate
- improving assessment and placement procedures
- acting as curriculum consultants

Requested Changes

Most of the changes suggested by lead instructors related to their conditions of employment. The most common concerns were:

- improved job security, benefits, rewards for seniority and pay commensurate with actual hours worked and greater responsibility
- more recognition from the Board that they are part of and equal to the rest of Toronto Board staff
- improved staff development, career path and upward mobility in the organization
- updated computerized personnel bank from which to hire new instructors

(2) School-Based Programs

There are a number of potential benefits which derive from having adult classes in schools. For example, day class adult learners are a positive role model for young children at school. Similarly, parent-learners are good role models for their own children. Also, adult learners in the schools can help strengthen school-community links.

As noted earlier, when classes are based in schools, the principal of the school is designated the Supervising Principal, and a curriculum advisor is assigned to the classes. Curriculum advisors provide curriculum and program support to the classes. (See Appendix H for more details.)

Principals reported limited contact with the classes and instructors. Most do not have the time to make regular visits to classes, and contact with learners usually occurred incidentally (e.g. in the school hallway when learners were arriving and leaving for classes). Some contact with learners also occurs through home and school associations.

Integration of Day School and Adult Programs

In most cases, the day school program and adult programs do not have much contact with each other. Even in the few schools where there is a slightly greater level of integration the day school staff have very limited information about adult literacy or ESL classes; usually the only contact is through the clerical or janitorial staff.

Principals and curriculum advisors report the following connections between the day school program and literacy programs. Although they are the exception rather than the rule, they do indicate several areas with potential for greater linkages:

- a few instructors in daytime literacy programs attend school staff meetings
- in one school, adult classes can use school computers and software
- the instructor in one program has developed a link with the school's parenting program
- use of daycare space and equipment for babysitting is provided during adult classes
- parents in some literacy programs are in home and school associations
- children take home fliers promoting literacy classes
- a few instructors are involved in the home and school association at one school

Principals felt very strongly that adult programs had a positive effect on:

- the school's relationship with the parents and the community
- teachers' relationships with parents
- children's achievement in school
- parent/child relationships

Principals noted that:

- "Children see their parents placing a high value on education by coming to adult classes."
- "Improved language skills at home in the family's mother tongue and in literacy is likely to help kids, especially very young kids."
- "When parents and teachers can communicate, the school can spot problems much more quickly."

One principal also commented that one reason his school has adult programs is to increase the enrollment of children in the day school program, and this has in fact occurred, even in a time of generally declining enrollment.

Curriculum advisors report that the relationship between the day school and adult program is often issue-centred, e.g., problems

with shared space. When a classroom is shared between a children's day school class and an adult night class, there can be friction about furnishings being moved, blackboards erased, competition for display space, storage facilities and so on. Almost unanimously, curriculum advisors felt some frustration over school-based adult programs, most typically that the adult program is not perceived by the school as part of its total program.

Requested Changes

Principals suggested the following changes and improvements:

- reduction in paperwork required for the programs
- improvment in the budget for adult programs
- improvment in communications between everyone involved in adult program delivery
- curriculum in adult classes should be oriented toward improving learner's understanding of school system

(3) Adult Basic Education Unit Services

In addition to the direct support given to instructors by leads and principals, there are other staff who provide assistance from the ABE Unit. Essentially they constitute a resource from which all literacy instructors can draw, and their roles include outreach, welcome classes, the Reception-Assessment-Referral Centre, numeracy facilitator, staff development and materials development.

(a) Outreach

Although the responsibility for publicizing programs, raising the community's awareness about literacy and motivating people to participate falls to everyone involved in literacy work including instructors, lead instructors, principals and learners, outreach into the community is the main function of three (part-time) ABE Unit staff. Each outreach worker is responsible for one of three Areas - East, West or Central. Their efforts are directed at:

- parents of students in Toronto Board of Education schools
- community-at-large
- social services agencies

Outreach workers may also help to establish or maintain community-based programs. In these cases, they work with agency staff, attending to the same kinds of details described above in the school-based case.

Outreach workers rely on a variety of methods to spread the word. They are:

- making and distributing flyers to parents and community groups; posting flyers in strategic locations
- speaking at parent meetings
- appearances at community events
- speaking with key individuals in the community, e.g. priest
- telephone contact

However, because information flows through community social networks so efficiently, many others beyond the primary parent

target groups are also being reached. As noted in Figure 29 forty percent of the school aged children of ESL-literacy learners are attending Toronto Board of Education schools; just over thirty percent attend MSSB schools.

Several problems were mentioned by outreach workers. They include:

- insufficient time to do comprehensive outreach, follow-up and maintenance; their work hours are fixed at 90 hrs/month
- lack of well-packaged and translated information appropriate for outreach
- although most principals are encouraging and supportive, some are reluctant to have adult classes in their schools for a number of reasons, e.g. lack of information, lack of space, an interest in the children only
- sometimes they feel as if they are working in isolation from other educators and literacy workers

(b) Welcome Classes

The ABE Unit houses two Welcome Classes. These classes are designed to ease the transition for some learners anxious about returning to a classroom situation. They also provide the opportunity to do a comprehensive assessment of learners because they can be observed in class over a period of time. These classes allow learners to begin right away especially if space elsewhere is not available.

Because the Welcome Classes are designed as flow-through classes and not permanent groups of learners, there is an even greater

tendency toward multi-level situations. This is alleviated by the use of volunteers and the regular assistance of the Numeracy Facilitator. Learners stay anywhere from a week to several months. They come through the Reception-Assessment-Referral Centre or from the Adult Basic Education Centre.

Several problems and suggestions were offered:

- follow-up of learners who move on to other programs is not possible; referrals should include a person to accompany the learner to his/her new class and a later follow-up
- many of these learners have other basic needs which should be networked with the Unit, eg. foodbanks, legal aid clinic, hostels, welfare.
- receiving ESL learners who cannot find appropriate ESL programs is problematic
- There is a lack of good materials, especially readers

(c) Reception-Assessment Referral Centre

The Reception-Assessment-Referral (RAR) Centre opened its doors in August 1988 as part of the ABE Unit. The role of the Centre is to provide a non-threatening entry for people intending to return to school. The assessment is intended to obtain sufficient information so that an appropriate referral may be made. The referral may be to one of two Welcome Classes operated at the ABE Unit as well as any other adult class in the system. There is an attempt to follow-up on referrals.

Some 200-300 learner contacts (personal and/or telephone) are made each month. Most persons learn of the Centre through word of mouth, some are referred by other agencies. No formal attempts to publicize the Centre's existence have been made

partly because there are limited resources to do so and partly because staff and space are nearing capacity use now.

Intake through the RAR Centre is not compulsory. There are a number of reasons for this. For example, many learners would be intimidated by a formal assessment. Other learners prefer to simply join a class in the immediate neighborhood or join a spouse or friend in a class; unless there is a serious mismatch between learners and program, learners who come in off the street are allowed to stay. Also, the Centre is not set up to handle the large numbers of learners who would flow through the Centre if it was mandatory.

Several problems were mentioned in connection with the RAR Centre:

- the RAR Centre facilitator is a part-time position
- more space
- publicize the centre both to instructors and the community
- no full-time programs to which learners can be referred
- computer would be an asset to maintain files

The RAR Centre must be considered to be in a development stage, having opened less than a year ago.

(d) Numeracy

Numeracy is an area which was not emphasized in The Right to Learn report. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that many

individuals who lack basic language skills also, have limited numeracy skills. Sometime after the establishment of the Unit (April 1988), a lead instructor with a mathematics background assumed the additional responsibility of Numeracy Project Leader. Early in 1989, this person became the Numeracy Facilitator, dropping his lead instructor duties.

The Numeracy Facilitator is a part-time position with responsibilities in the following areas:

- finding and assessing learning materials
- staff development (with the Staff Development Facilitator)
- curriculum support to facilitators
- curriculum development
- the Welcome Class, developing assessment and placement instruments, conducting assessments and teaching
- liaison with other Board staff, observing related programs and collaboration with other ABE programs
- providing support to the Family Math program of the Board

Some problems were mentioned:

- lack of learner-centred basic math materials; most from the U.S. and U.K. must be adapted
- insufficient time (25 hours/week) to do everything that has to be done
- difficulty in co-ordinating time with other Unit staff who are also there on a part-time basis

(e) Staff Development and Materials Development

Staff development and materials development for adult literacy instructors are the responsibility of two part-time Adult Basic Education Unit facilitators. The Staff Development Facilitator assesses instructors' needs, develops training sessions, and

presents workshops. Working closely with the Materials Development Facilitator, she also produces materials for use in the classroom by instructors.

The Materials Development Facilitator has several responsibilities including collecting literacy materials, assessing their suitability for adult programs, and making them widely available to instructors. In order to make materials easily accessible, a lending Resource Centre has been established at the ABE Unit. Inservice workshops are often developed jointly with the Staff Development Facilitator because their roles which are essentially program/instructor support, complement one another well.

Workshops have been offered by both facilitators recently to meet instructors' needs for materials and staff development. For example,

- providing our own resources (three 2 hour sessions)
- a starter kit for new instructors
- more than meets the eye: focussing on a learner-centred curriculum (held one night/per week from 4:00-6:30 for 12 weeks)
- producing our own Resources (2 hour workshops)
- study circles using school-based materials
- making cents of decimals (workshop)
- facilitating group process
- seminar in ESL-Literacy (4-part series)
- working with a range of literacy levels in the classroom
- literacy: a school-community issue

Some perceived constraints and obstacles discribed by the Staff Development Facilitator and the Materials Development Facilitator are:

- insufficient hours allocated to position; no provision made for developmental work
- methodology has moved beyond theory so that we are not really certain about what constitutes good curriculum; lack of curriculum guidelines
- editing learner-produced materials for use beyond the immediate classroom from which it originates is very labour-intensive

(f) Unit Administration

The Administrator of the Adult Basic Education Unit supervises and co-ordinates the activities of the outreach workers, the welcome classes, the Reception-Assessment-Referral Centre, the Numeracy Facilitator, the Staff Development Facilitator, the Materials Development Facilitator and the Lead Instructors/Curriculum Advisors. Both short-term and long-term planning is done with the various components of the unit to ensure that the current tasks and responsibilities assigned to the staff can be most efficiently and effectively carried out and that future needs can also be met. The objective is to devise plans that are comprehensive and where the various parts of the unit are well integrated and serve complementary functions.

The Administrator serves as the main link between the Adult Basic Education Unit and its work in the field, and the Continuing Education Committee. Therefore, this position has responsibilities both above and below it as shown in Figure 67.

Similarly, the Administrator is one of the primary liaison persons for community organizations working in the field of literacy. The Administrator sits on the Adult Basic Education Consultative Committee as one way of maintaining relations with Community-based groups. As the need and opportunity arise, the Administrator also assumes an advocacy role for literacy in the community.

(4) Centralized Administrative Support

The administrative model can be summarized best in chart form. Figure 67 shows the relationships between different levels of the hierarchy which pertain directly to adult literacy programs. Essentially, the administration views its primary role as the provision of quality programs to adult learners (including, at the various level of the hierarchy: the recruitment, selection and training of staff; providing suitable materials to instructors; insuring that necessary funds are available to start and maintain programs). More specifically, levels A to D implement Board policies and develop administrative procedures.

Structures and Processes

Regular meetings are held between the Adult and Continuing Education Officer, the ABE Unit Administrator and the ESL Resource Centre Administrative Leads. These meetings which focus equally on administrative and program matters, take place every two weeks on the average. The Right to Learn report recommended

the establishment of what is now called the Adult Basic Education Consultative Committee. This group meets regularly (usually monthly) to provide a forum for representatives from community based programs and the Board to exchange information and concerns. Membership consists of:

- trustees
- Co-ordinator of Continuing Education
- Adult and Continuing Education Officer
- Adult Basic Education Unit Manager
- representatives of community-based literacy organizations, government departments and umbrella groups

Program Goals

The major goal is the implementation of the recommendations of The Right To Learn report. More generally, administrative staff stated their goals to be:

- to provide the best quality programs possible (e.g. best possible space, supply budgets, training for instructors, consultation with instructors, learning materials)
- to provide a broad range of literacy programs given varying constraints (e.g. available resources, part-time instructors)
- to expand the number of learners and programs
- to remain leaders in the field of literacy, and to expand in areas such as workplace programs, mother-tongue literacy and assessment and placement procedures
- to continue to develop meaningful links between what children learn in the regular day school program and what their parents learn in Continuing Education classes

- to improve communication and co-operation between the Continuing Education staff and the day school staff and staff of other departments

- to help provide better communications between home and school

The general consensus is that learners are receiving a good product. However, some difficulties and changes were recommended:

- more staff for curriculum development and clerical support
- difficulties in opening up adult literacy classes in secondary schools
- clarification of job descriptions: "...what you are willing to do shouldn't determine your job description"

- enhance and expand jobs of lead instructors: "...lead instructors are sometimes glorified mailmen; they should be skilled consultants"
- more outreach to the business community for workplace (MWP) programs; more advertising resources
- improved assessment and placement procedures

Assessment Of The Implementation Of The Right To Learn Report By The Administration

Staff from lead instructors up through the hierarchy are responsible in different ways for the monitoring of programs: leads are responsible for individual programs, administrative leads for programs supervised by their lead instructors, etc. Input from these various levels is channeled into the implementation process of The Right to Learn report.

Although there are many measures of program success, administrative staff noted that "adult learners vote with their feet" -- if a program is not good, attendance will fall and the

program will have to close as a result. The data presented earlier on the program and enrollment figures for 1984-87 showed the very large increases in both areas.

Trustees are also in touch with parent-learners, as are school principals, and are able to keep staff informed should problems arise.

In each of the six community-based literacy organizations (eg. East End Literacy) funded by the Board, a Superintendent sits on the agency's Board of Directors thus providing a different perspective on the implementation of The Right to Learn report. Two areas mentioned as needing improvement are integration with other departments and the regular day school program and participation by other levels of government. All administrators felt that there was work to be done on improving communications and practical links with the rest of the system, although some gains had been made in this area over the past few years as a result of the high profile The Right to Learn report.

One area mentioned was the participation by other levels of government in Board literacy efforts. The provincial government participates in Toronto Board adult literacy programs in several ways:

- Ministry of Education - provides funding to the Metro Board and consequently to all the area Boards including Toronto, for the provision of literacy and ESL programs.

- Ministry of Citizenship and Ministry of Skills Development participate in co-sponsored events, staff development workshops and materials development

- both Ministries provide grants which support the advancement of literacy programming and services (eg. special projects)

The Toronto Board of Education has made representations to the provincial and federal governments to try to increase their participation in literacy programming. The federal government has been slow to provide funding for literacy. It was noted that this was a particularly conspicuous absence considering that Federal immigration policy allows for rising levels of immigration without providing additional funding for language training for New Canadians. However, Federal government officials argue that they cannot fund educational programs directly because they fall within provincial jurisdiction.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PROGRAMS

Five policy areas are identified in The Right to Learn (p.8) report.

1) inservice and staff development
2) provision of learner-centered materials and programs
3) co-ordination, advocacy and leadership
4) creation of community awareness
5) funding arrangements on a cost sharing basis

Each of these will be discussed in light of the information generated by this research. Again, the reader is reminded that this research comes at a relatively early stage in the growth and development of the Board's literacy initiatives. This report, therefore, provides a snapshot of an implementation process which is far from being complete.

(1) Inservice and Staff Development

Areas for inservice were identified by instructors. Both instructors of unilingual and ESL-literacy learners requested workshops on curriculum ideas; the ESL-literacy group wanted workshops on teaching in a bilingual or multilingual setting as well.

Staff development includes issues that extend beyond the classroom. Many instructors have long-term professional goals related to education. As a resource management strategy, consideration could be given to making available to interested instructors, workshops or short courses in the areas in which they have expressed interest (and which the Board can provide). The provision of such courses may allay some of the pessimism felt by instructors about their professional prospects at the Board.

(2) Provision of Learner-Centered Materials and Programs

(a) Materials

There are several ways in which materials and programs must be examined, including their availability, their suitability, their accessibility to instructors, the instructors' awareness of their existence and ability to use them effectively in their own classes. While there has been considerable effort made in obtaining adult basic education materials from international sources and cataloging them, many of these resources do not find their way to instructors. Generally, instructors do not make extensive use of the centrally housed collection of materials. In this respect the Adult Basic Education Unit appears to be under-utilized by instructors. Maintaining a central library of materials may not be the most effective means of putting teaching materials into the hands of instructors. Also, there is

a disproportionate amount of material aimed at the unilingual learner as compared to the ESL-literacy learner, although this is largely a reflection of what is available on the market as well as the newness of ESL-literacy programs. Furthermore, there is no Provincial screening process for adult learning materials as there is for children's materials (eg. through the Ministry of Education's Circular 14). At the moment, screening is done by the Materials Development Facilitator, the lead instructor and the instructors based on their expertise and knowledge.

The Right to Learn recommended that learner-produced materials be used in combination with those which are commercially-produced and facilitator-developed. While few learner-produced materials were in evidence during our observations of classes, it may be unreasonable to expect that individual literacy classes have had the time or resources to produce materials which can be utilized by a wider group of learners. The notable exceptions are those produced by larger agencies such as East End Literacy, St. Christopher House and Parkdale Project Read. However, even these groups are essentially teaching organizations and are able to publish only infrequently, having neither the staff nor the resources to expand this activity. Many more materials produced by learners could be adapted for wider use, but the problem lies in the expense and logistics of editing and mass producing such items. Although workshops have been given for developing materials from within instructors' own classes, the lack of time

and money makes the matter of disseminating such materials more widely, a difficult one.

(b) Programs

The provision of programs is in a healthy state. Almost without exception, the instructors we observed were very flexible and accommodating of their students and their circumstances. The classes themselves are learner-centred and take into account a wide range of learners' strengths, weaknesses and interests. Those parts of the organization which are responsible for programs are very responsive to the needs of the community. New classes can be begun virtually on request, with support in finding class space, hiring an instructor, providing a modest supply/materials budget, arranging for childcare, etc.

(3) Coordination, Advocacy and Leadership

The Right to Learn report's goal in the area of coordination states that the Board "take initiatives in the areas of outreach and linkage with other levels of government, business, industry and labour, community-based agencies, and adult literacy organizations such as the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy to coordinate efforts to provide Adult Basic Education in the City of Toronto" (p.17). To this point, the Board has taken its first steps towards achieving this objective. The Adult Basic Education Consultative Committee helps to facilitate the

coordination of programs with the needs of the community. The committee has good representation from both community-based agencies and the school Board.

While it is acknowledged that these areas of coordination are important, it is at least as important that other areas closer to the classroom be more coordinated, such as adult programs and day school programs, and the Continuing Education Department with other departments.

(4) Creation of Community Awareness

This study did not examine the community's awareness of the problem of adult illiteracy. While this is an interesting question, the present research focussed on the means by which learners found out about Board-sponsored literacy classes.

Clearly, the two groups of learners received their information in different ways. The unilingual learners gain theirs through a largely institutional network and the ESL-literacy learners through their social networks. The electronic media (which has been relatively little-used by the Board because of its costs) is not a major conduit of information to learners. Similarly, the print media is not a very effective means of disseminating this information (although written information might be transmitted indirectly through someone who is literate and has read an advertising brochure or browsed through a night school course

calendar and then passed the information on to a friend or relative).

For many persons for whom English is not a first language, the availability of information alone is insufficient to lead them to seek out classes. Our findings suggest that before they are prepared to make the decision to return to school, they must first reach a relatively high degree of social integration within their communities. Inextricably linked to the concept of social integration are related factors such as self-esteem, confidence, and a greater awareness of not only the communities into which they are integrated but other possibilities as well (e.g. vocational and educational - both their own and their children's).

Persons who learned English as a first language but whose reading and writing skills are weak tend to become involved in literacy programs through an institutional network such as The John Howard Society, Queen Street Mental Health Centre, a group home situation, or a social worker. While the institutional network is an effective way of providing information to potential learners who fall into it, the many people who exist outside such networks are much more difficult to reach and have not been reached nearly as well.

(5) Funding Arrangements on a Cost Sharing Basis

There has been a modest amount of financial involvement by the provincial Ministries of Skills Development, and of Citizenship in Toronto Board literacy efforts. Most of this involvement has been to fund special projects conducted by the facilitators, or the lead instructors. Provincial funding has been obtained on a grant-for-project basis. None has been available on a continuous basis.

There is no involvement by the federal government, which holds that education is a provincial responsibility. The $110 million allocated by the federal government for adult illiteracy in 1988-89 is earmarked for research and special projects. No monies will be distributed for programs.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As the present study was being concluded, a number of new issues emerged calling for further investigation. Some of these questions did not fall within the purview of this research project; other questions went unanswered because of limited resources and manpower; and still other questions arose only toward the latter stages of the project when it was too late to carry out a fair investigation of them. The areas which warrant further investigation are described below with the hope that they be considered for further research.

Numeracy - The question of numeracy was largely omitted from this research. As was pointed out at the outset, the clear emphasis in The Right to Learn report is on illiteracy, and that remained the focus of the research. However, in recent months, the Continuing Education Department has given numeracy a high priority, drafting an "Adult Basic Math (ABM) Implementation Project" in recognition of the relationship often found between illiteracy and innumeracy. A major new thrust such as the ABM Implementation Plan deserves to be monitored.

Multi-cultural Workplace Programs - MWP programs are another emerging area in the field of literacy. These programs would represent the Board's deepest reach into the community, the workplaces of adult learners. The two MWP classes (Royal Ontario

Museum and Women's College Hospital) which were included in the present study ceased operations during the course of the research and no firm conclusions can be drawn regarding them. Further research in this area could be tied to the report on Chinese restaurant workers recently received by the Board.

Continuous Enrollment - One of the most frequently expressed complaints from instructors was that enrollment must be open at all times, thus necessitating constant reviews of work for many students. Students can be as frustrated as instructors over the constant returns-to-the-beginning cycle found in many programs, and this may contribute to the high drop out rate of learners. Alternatives might be attempted and evaluated, such as short-term classes of 3 or 4 months duration with no continuous enrollment. Regular adult literacy classes could serve as a "control group," to determine if one is more viable than the other.

High Drop Out Rate - Many classes will experience a complete turnover in learners within a year. Clearly language skills cannot be acquired over such a brief period of instruction. A number of prescriptive steps might be tried to reduce the high drop out rate among adult learners; these prescriptive steps should be evaluated to determine their effectiveness. Indeed, the whole problem of adult program drop outs should be examined much more systematically to determine causes, effects and possible solutions, and the solutions should be evaluated.

Workshops, Seminars, Conferences - Instructors requested additional training through several means. Staff development initiatives could be evaluated to determine what is most useful to them.

Study Circles - The utilization of study circles as an instructional model was mentioned in The Right to Learn report. However, there was insufficient opportunity to observe one during the course of the research. While they remain highly regarded as a means of instructing adults, their effectiveness and popularity have yet to be demonstrated.

Instructor Turnover - The turnover rate for instructors is fairly high (estimated at at least 25% per year). This represents a considerable waste of resources and investment, particularly if these instructors leave teaching completely. Also, given the strong allegiances formed by learners for their instructors, the turnover rate might be a contributing factor to the high drop out rate of adult learners. While the present findings suggest reasons for instructors changing jobs or leaving the field entirely, more specific research into this problem is called for. Why did they resign/change jobs? What might have induced them to continue? Will they return to teaching?

Guidelines for Learner Placement - These guidelines developed by the Continuing Education Department as part of the solution to

the assessment and placement problem have not yet been evaluated in terms of their practicality or usefulness for either learners or instructors. In principle, they address the need for more clearly defined levels of instruction for adult learners but they do not provide the means for accurate assessment. They also do not take into account: (1) that for a class to remain in existence is essentially a numbers game, thereby making referrals of students to other classes problematic; (2) the strong loyalties learners develop for their instructors; or (3) the ease/difficulty with which the guidelines can be used.

8. CONCLUSION

A 500% plus increase in the number of programs offered and an almost 300% increase in the number of learners served, occurring in a three year period, is an extraordinary rate of growth. This very rapid expansion has been successful in reaching a variety of learners with a variety of types of program to accommodate different needs and learning styles. Furthermore, the programs are viewed with real satisfaction by the learners and the instructors, who agree that the degree of fluency being acquired in the programs is satisfactory.

It is not surprising that any service which expands at such a rate will experience stress and strain. Thus, at every level from front-line instructors to senior administrators, one hears about lack of time, lack of materials, and lack of money-shortages, in fact, of everything except work to be done.

This report comes at a moment in the evolution of the Toronto Board of Education's adult literacy programming when structures and key personnel are recently all in place, and when extremely rapid expansion shows some signs of cooling down a little. The enormous gains, in quantity and quality, of the last three years are testimony to tremendous effort and dedication by people at all levels in the structure. Further development now rests on a solid basis of experience and service.

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APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

AGENCY-BASED CO-SPONSORED PROGRAMS A community agency offers a program jointly with the Toronto Board of Education. The agency usually does outreach for learners and provides space for the program, and may supply clerical support, child care, etc. The Toronto Board of Education provides the instructor, materials and supply budget, administrative and curriculum support, and inservice training for instructors for six community-based literacy organizations (three "Literacy Houses" and three "Neighbourhood Learning Centres"). Funding is through grants based on instructional hours in tutoring programs. The Board holds a seat on an agency's board of directors.

BILINGUAL LITERACY PROGRAM A program taught using the learners' mother tongue and English as the instructional languages. Learners may be functionally illiterate in their mother tongue.

COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION A method of program delivery in which learners use computers as their main source of instruction, with instructors providing support and non-computer-based instruction.

ESL-LITERACY PROGRAM A program taught mostly in English, for learners for whom English is a second language. Learners may be illiterate in their mother tongue. The instructor is usually bilingual/trilingual and uses the learners' mother tongue to explain difficult work.

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS An institution (e.g., jail, hospital, nursing home) which offers a literacy program through co-sponsorship with the Board; similar to agency-based co-sponsored programs.

PEER TUTORING A method of program delivery where learners act as tutors to other learners, with the support of an instructor.

SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS A Toronto Board of Education school provides space for literacy programs during the regular school day or after hours. The school principal may be appointed Supervisory Principal for the program with curriculum support provided by a curriculum advisor. All costs are absorbed by the Board.

UNILINGUAL LITERACY PROGRAM A program that uses English as the instructional language, for learners who are native speakers of English.

1:1 TUTORING A method of program delivery in which an instructor works with volunteer tutors to provide a literacy program. Tutors work 1:1 with learners with the instructors providing tutor support and training and curriculum supervision.

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Limitations imposed on the research by programs and subjects are described below.

1) The Programs

a) Initial Assessments - Some programs carry out assessments of their students for placement purposes. However, the assessments are usually not rigorous and students of varying abilities and backgrounds are found in most classes. This situation is even more prevalent where no assessments are made.

This diversity in the student population both between and within classes makes the use of standardized tests impossible as well as undesirable.

b) Curriculum Diversity - There is tremendous variety in the programs offered to adults seeking to improve their language skills. However, there are no prescribed courses of study for these programs. Teachers have a great deal of flexibility in designing their programs to meet the specific needs and wants of their students. It is fairly common to find teachers tailoring courses for individual students so that there are wide variations in what is taught in any given class.

While such flexibility may prove to be one of the programs' strengths, it also violates a basic tenet of traditional research. With such diversity and non-standardization among and within the treatments, it would not be possible to make meaningful inferences about the programs viz-a-viz treatment effects.

c) Continuous Registration - Most programs allow students to register throughout the year. This flexibility enables adults to join literacy classes as their situations permit and keeps the enrollments up. However, this flexibility means that at any given point in time, a class may have students who have just begun the program and others who have been involved for some period of time.

This variation in the amount of time students have been involved in programs means that treatment effects for these groups cannot be measured in any meaningful way at any single point(s) in time using traditional pretest-posttest methods.

d) Attendance - Most programs have no formal regulations regarding attendance. If a class is operated two days a week, students may attend just one day. Similarly, students may arrive or leave at any point during a class. Also, students may interrupt their schooling for periods of time.

Irregular or periodic attendance has obvious implications for the research. Clearly, the treatment effects cannot be measured accurately when the students are not receiving equal amounts of instruction.

e) Duration - Many programs are of no set duration; this is especially true of ESL-literacy and community-based programs which usually operate for as long as there are participants interested in attending classes. In other words, there is no specific length of treatment for many programs.

The lack of consistency in the durations of the programs makes comparative analyses impossible.

f) External Influences - Many students have very practical reasons for attending literacy classes, e.g. finding better employment. Often highly motivated, these students take every opportunity to learn. Students seek help from friends and even take additional courses elsewhere to achieve their goals as quickly as possible.

The additional efforts made by students above and beyond their literacy courses cannot be controlled for and therefore, it would be impossible to determine what gains are attributable to TBE literacy classes.

2) <u>The Students</u>

a) Background - The students who are involved in adult literacy programs represent a tremendous diversity of backgrounds. There are those who cannot read at a grade one level and those who can read as well as the average college student. However, the person who cannot read may be able to do grade 12 mathematics. Some students are employed and some are not. Some students live with a spouse and children while others are single. Some students live in apartments or houses while others have no permanent address.

Such diversity may speak well of the program which can attract people to them from literally all walks of life; however, it makes traditional research virtually impossible. For example, it is not possible to find a comparable control group with similar characteristics. Nor is it ethically justifiable to divide the students into two groups, one control and one experimental, and deny those who are assigned to the control group access to literacy programs.

b) Test Phobia - Many adult students taking literacy courses are not good test candidates. For many students, the testing situation represents one aspect of school that they turned away from initially. Other adults have had limited test taking experience at most and other students would simply not treat the exercise with any seriousness. Apart from the fact that there are no test instruments suitable for this population, formal testing of any kind is not appropriate.

c) Goals - Each student has his/her own motivation for coming back to school. For some it stems from a need to be able to complete a job application form, search the classified newspaper ads for accommodation or get a driver's license. For others, it is a desire to be able to read to their children, help them with their homework or read for their own enjoyment. Still others take classes to come in out of the cold in the winter or socialize with other people. Although teachers and administrators have goals for their students in a sense, these are irrelevant. Each student has a reason for attending a literacy program and has personal goals to be striven for.

Unlike a regular day school program where the measurable goal is for students to advance by one grade every year, the diversity of the individualized goals of adult students makes group evaluations impossible.

d) Transience - Many of the individuals who are involved in adult literacy programs are relatively transient in terms of their regular participation in classes. The reasons for the transience may vary from a change in residence or job to a decline in motivation.

The implications for any research conducted with this population are obvious. Those who leave programs temporarily would be receiving something less than the full treatment. Those who drop out permanently would simply be lost to the study, resulting in a smaller final sample.

3) <u>The Organization</u>

a) TBE - The Board is not organized in such a way as to be able to assist directly, the research effort. With most of their focus on the provision of programming (e.g. finding teachers, locations, paying staff, co-ordinating efforts between the Board and other agencies and groups, etc.), the Continuing Education Department's central office cannot direct its limited resources to students or curriculum. However, the ABE Unit and the two Adult ESL Administrative Resource Centres were able to assist the research effort considerably.

APPENDIX C

URBAN DIMENSIONS OF ILLITERACY

The work of urban sociologists and geographers can shed considerable light on the extent and nature of adult illiteracy in Toronto. In particular, the research conducted by Robert Murdie of York University over three decades proves to be very useful in helping us to construct a social geography of the city, thereby giving illiteracy and its known (and suspected) correlates a spatial dimension. In other words, this work gives us an answer (although admittedly not the only answer) to the questions, "where are the high concentrations of illiterate adults in Toronto?" and "what other characteristics are related to illiteracy for our population?" Consequently, it will allow us to see if our programs are located in the areas of greatest need and if those programs are suitable for the groups being served.

Urban factorial ecologists utilize a multivariate statistical method called principal components analysis. The technique summarizes large quantities of data into a few key dimensions making the interpretation and analysis of complex phenomena much more manageable. Also, these dimensions can be mapped, resulting in a social geography of the city.

Using twenty-four variables from the latest census, the principal components analysis resulted in a four factor solution of which only the first and third are retained for further interpretation. The variables associated with these two factors indicate that they are related to illiteracy. The other two are not. The solution is provided in Table C.1 and the key to the variables is in Table C-2. Only co-efficients of $\pm$ 0.50 are listed.

Factor I - ESL/Occupational Status/Illiteracy. The first factor extracted from the data accounts for 34% of the original variance. The co-efficients (also called loadings) show clearly that this dimension measures differences in language and occupational status among the 142 census tracts. As well, the illiteracy variable (ILLIT) loads here. The factor is labelled accordingly. It has high positive loadings of non-official languages, low paying occupations, immigration and less than grade 9 education and high negative loadings on better paying occupations and English as a mother tongue.

Figure C.3 shows the geography of Factor 1. The census tracts in the west-central part of the city define an area with high proportions of Portuguese and Italian speaking immigrants with less than a grade 9 education working in low paying jobs. To a slightly lesser degree, this pattern extends into the city's northwest. In other words, this map can be interpreted as a map of illiteracy and its correlates for the City of Toronto.

Factor 3 - Low Socio-Economic Status. The third dimension brings together three variables which are often associated with illiteracy; single parents, unemployment and low incomes. Figure C.4 shows that high concentrations of persons defined by these characteristics are found in areas containing large public housing and low income housing tracts.

Summary

The principal components analysis separates the social fabric of the city into two distinct populations relevant to this study. Figure C.3 clearly defines an ESL or New Canadian area where a large number of people have limited education and low paying jobs. Learners for ESL-literacy programs are drawn from this population. The second population mapped in Figure C.4 shows high concentrations of low-income single parents, arguably with few job skills and limited education and possibly a more intractable population with regard to upward social mobility than the group defined by Factor 1 (and Figure C.3). Most of the unilingual learners come from this group (Factor 3 and Figure C.4).

VARIMAX ROTATED PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS PATTERN*

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 3
NONOFFIL	.93	
ILLIT	.89	
MANUF	.84	
PORTMT	.84	
FEMSERV	.78	
IMMIG65-78	.73	
MALESERV	.72	
ITALIANMT	.50	
AVGINC	-.52	
MALESALES	-.69	
MGRPROF	-.79	
ENGMT	-.94	
SINGPRT		.90
LOWINC		.84
UNEMP		.76
Variance Explained	34%	16%
Eigenvalue	8.23	3.77

* Factors 2 and 4 are eliminated because they are not relevant for the purposes of this study.

APPENDIX C.2

VARIABLES USED IN PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS ANALYSIS

Variables	Definitions
AVGINC	Average income
ENGMT	English mother tongue
FEMSERV	Females in service occupations
ITALIANMT	Italian mother tongue
IMMIG65-78	Immigration between 1965 and 1978
LOWINC	Low income families
ILLIT	Less than grade 9 education (illiteracy threshold)
MGRPROF	Managerial and professional occupations
MALESALES	Males in sales occupation
MALESERV	Males in service occupations
MANUF	Manufacturing occupations
NONOFFIL	Non-official languages
PORTMT	Portuguese mother tongue
SINGPRT	Single parent
UNEMP	Unemployed

Figure C.3

FACTOR 1

ESL/OCCUPATIONAL STATUS/ILLITERACY

Areas with high proportions of non-official languages (Portuguese and Italian mother tongues), low paying occupations, immigration from 1965-78 and less than grade 9 education.

HIGH CONCENTRATION

VERY HIGH CONCENTRATION

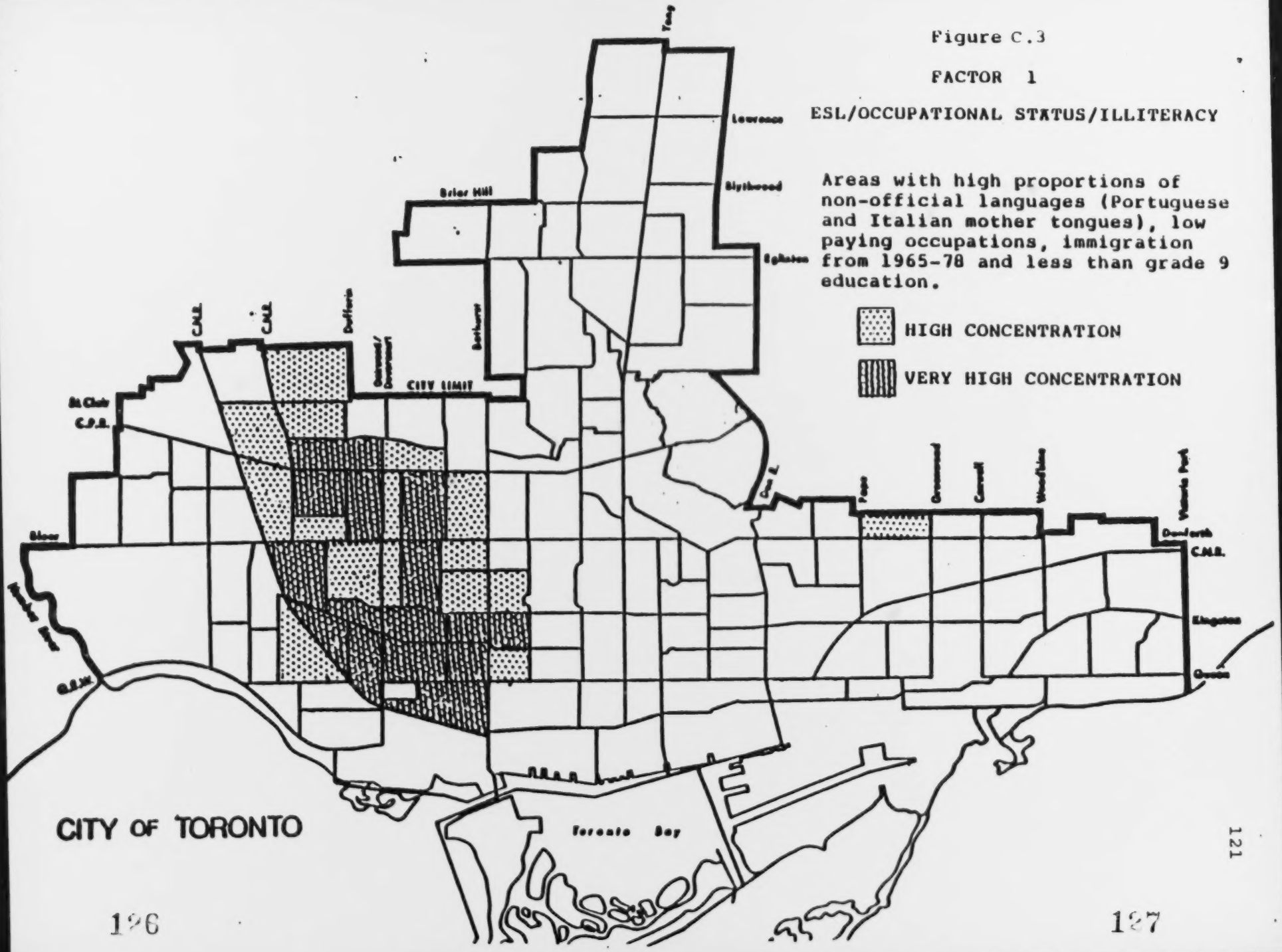


Figure C.4

FACTOR 3

LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Areas with high proportions of single parents, unemployment and low per capita incomes.

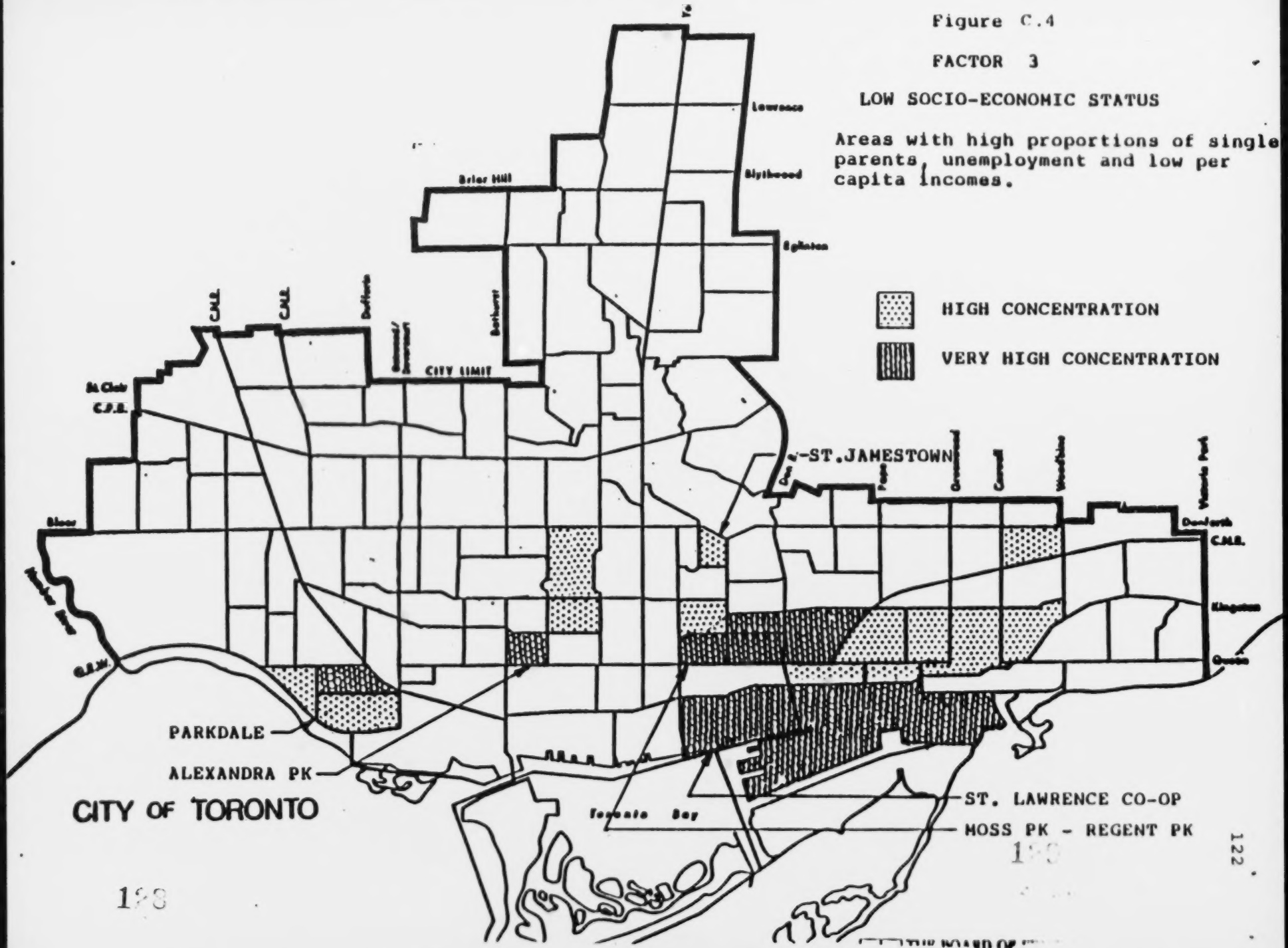
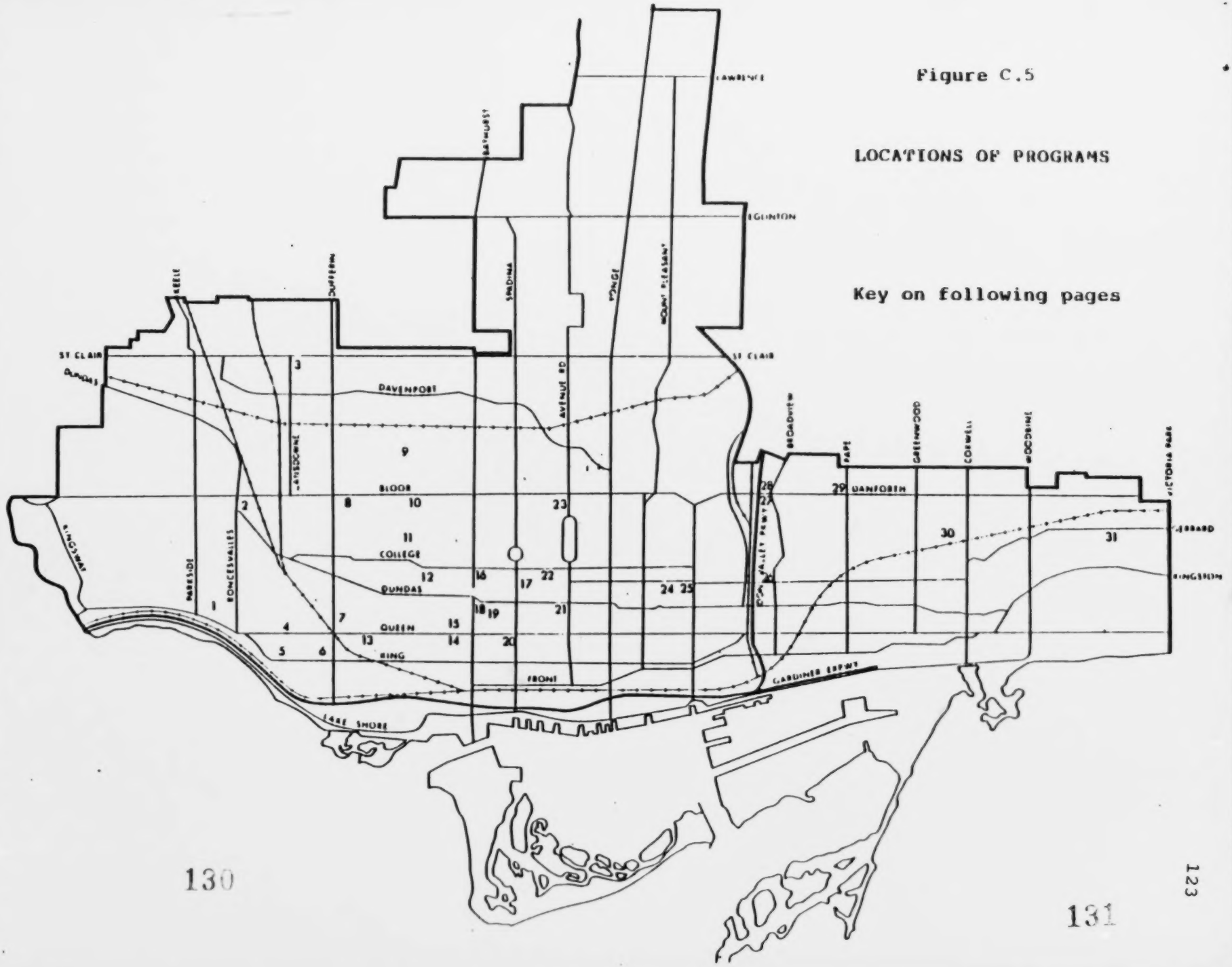


Figure C.5

LOCATIONS OF PROGRAMS

Key on following pages



PROGRAM LOCATIONS AND TYPES FOR FIGURE C.5

ESL-LITERACY PROGRAMS

Co-Sponsored Programs, Agency-Based

Broadview Manor Apartments (28)	Bilingual, Greek
Chinese Interpreter & Information Services Cecil Street Community Centre (17)	Bilingual, Chinese
Greek Community & Social Services Centre (29)	Bilingual, Greek
Joe Piccinini Community Centre (3)	Bilingual, Italian
Ontario Welcome House (21)	ESL-literacy
Royal Ontario Museum (23)	ESL-literacy
St. Christopher House (14)	Bilingual, Portuguese
Scadding Court/Sanderson Library (18)	

School-Based

Alexander Muir/Gladstone Public School (7)	Bilingual, Portuguese
Charles G. Fraser Public School (15)	Bilingual, Portuguese ESL-literacy
Christie Public School (9)	Bilingual, Hindi Bilingual, Greek ESL-literacy
Grace Street Public School (12)	Bilingual, Portuguese
Kensington Public School (16)	Bilingual, Chinese
Montrose Public School (11)	Bilingual, Portuguese Bilingual, Chinese
Parkdale Collegiate (5)	Bilingual, Portuguese
Parkdale Public School (4)	Bilingual, Portuguese
Ryerson Public School (19)	Bilingual, Portuguese

Program Locations and Types for Figure C.5

UNILINGUAL LITERACY PROGRAMS

Co-Sponsored Programs, Agency-Based

Beat the Street/Frontier College (24)	1:1 tutoring Peer Tutoring
East End Literacy (25)	1:1 tutoring
Eastview Community Centre (30)	Group Program
Youth Employment Services (Futures) (30)	1:1 tutoring

Agency-Based Institutional

Operation Springboard

Art Eggleton House (22) Frank Drea House (1) North Beaches House (31)	1:1 tutoring
Parkdale Nursing Home (6)	Group Program
Queen Street Mental Health Care (13)	1:1 tutoring Group Program Peer tutoring
Toronto Jail (26)	1:1 tutoring

School-Based

City Adult Learning Centre A.B.E.C. East (27)	Computer assisted
West Park Secondary School A.B.E.C. West (2)	Computer assisted

Other

Adult Basic Education Unit (10)
ESL Resource Centre East (27)
ESL Resource Centre West (10)

APPENDIX D.1

X^2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INSTRUCTOR/LEARNER CLASSROOM BEHAVIOURS AND LEARNER PERFORMANCE

Learner Performance	Instructor	Learner
<u>ESL-Literacy</u>		
Reading	**X^2=3.06** **sig.=0.08**	X^2=2.44 sig.=0.12
Writing	X^2=0.49 sig.=0.49	X^2=1.26 sig.=0.26
Speaking	**X^2=3.94** **sig.=0.05**	**X^2=7.39** **sig.=0.01**
<u>Unilingual</u>		
Reading	**X^2=3.52** **sig.=0.06**	X^2=3.28 sig.=0.07
Writing	X^2=8.84 sig.=0.36	X^2=1.15 sig.=0.28
Speaking	X^2=6.14 sig.=0.01	X^2=8.44 sig.=0.00

Note: Bold numbers indicate statistically significant relationships (0.10 level).

APPENDIX D.2

X^2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INSTRUCTOR/INSTRUCTION CHARACTERISTICS AND ESL-LITERACY PERFORMANCE

Characteristics	Learner Performance		
	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Years of Teaching Experience	X^2=0.03 sig.=0.86	X^2=1.07 sig.=0.30	X^2=0.01 sig.=0.94
Inservice (Y/N)	X^2=1.24 sig.=0.27	**X^2=3.15** **sig.=0.05**	X^2=0.25 sig.=0.62
Assessments of Learners (Y/N)	X^2=0.27 sig.=0.61	X^2=1.17 sig.=0.28	X^2=1.14 sig.=0.28
Monitor Progress of Learners (Y/N)	X^2=0.03 sig.=0.87	X^2=0.76 sig.=0.38	X^2=0.13 sig.=0.72
Sufficient Contact with Leads/Principals (Y/N)	X^2=0.04 sig.=0.83	X^2=0.28 sig.=0.60	X^2=0.01 sig.=0.91
Average Class Size (<10>)	**X^2=4.42** **sig.=0.04**	**X^2=2.48** **sig.=0.10**	X^2=1.95 sig.=0.16

Note: Bold numbers indicate statistically significant relationships (0.10 Level).

APPENDIX D.3

X^2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INSTRUCTOR/INSTRUCTION CHARACTERISTICS AND UNILINGUAL LITERACY LEARNERS

Characteristics	Learner Performance	
	Reading	Writing
Years of Teaching Experience	**X^2=2.36 sig.=0.09**	**X^2=2.34 sig.=0.10**
Inservice (Y/N)	X^2=0.68 sig.=0.41	X^2=1.04 sig.=0.31
Assessments of Learners (Y/N)	X^2=0.07 sig.=0.79	X^2=0.16 sig.=0.69
Monitor Progress of Learners (Y/N)	X^2=0.24 sig.=0.63	X^2=0.47 sig.=0.49
Sufficient Contact with Leads/Principals (Y/N)	<—insufficient sample—>	
Average Class Size (<6>)	X^2=0.00 sig.=1.00	X^2=0.14 sig.=0.71

Note: Bold numbers indicate statistically significant relationships (0.10 Level).

* Speaking performance for unilingual learners is not a relevant measure.

APPENDIX E

Separate factor analyses were performed for the ESL-literacy and unilingual subpopulations. The varimax rotated factor patterns are presented in Tables E.1 and E.2. The arbitrary cut-off point for loadings is ± 0.50; where a variable does not meet this minimum, the next highest co-efficient is given. As is the common practice, the factors are labelled according to the variables which load on it most highly.

ESL-LITERACY FACTOR STRUCTURE

Twenty-two variables for the ESL-literacy sub-group were factored resulting in the seven dimension solution summarized in Table E.1. These seven factors represent 67% of the original variance.

Factor 1 - Learner Performance. The three language performance items, reading, writing and speaking load here with the variables which measure the length of time learners stay in class and level. Therefore, ESL-literacy gains in reading, writing and speaking are positively related to the length of time a learner spends in a program and the learner's level of English.

Factor 2 - The Learning Environment. Five variables which load on Factor 2 describe the learner's satisfaction with his/her learning environment, ie. class hours, the teacher's style, hours of instruction per week, learning materials available, and location. The sixth variable is a measure of the regularity of attendance. In other words, students who are generally positive about their learning environment will attend classes on a regular basis. It is interesting to note that regularity of attendance loads here and not on Factor I with the three performance variables.

Factor 3 - The Learner. The third factor reveals the relationships between the learner's age, his/her age upon coming to Canada, the number of children he/she has and the year of immigration. This clustering of variables defines a group of older learners with families, who came to Canada as adults but who are not recent immigrants.

Factor 4 - Class Hours. The fourth factor loads the two variables which describe the number of days per week classes are held and the total number of instructional hours per week. No other variables are related to these characteristics.

Factor 5 - Social Integration. Factor 5 loads two variables; social integration and occupational status. In other words, ESL-literacy learners who have better jobs are usually more integrated into Canadian society.

Factor 6 - Previous Education. The last Factor reveals an inverse relationship between the amount of previous education attained by a learner and the length of time the learner estimates it will take to reach his/her educational goals. In other words, the more education an ESL-literacy learner has had, the lower his/her estimate of time required to attain educational goals.

UNILINGUAL FACTOR STRUCTURE

Seventeen variables were factor analyzed resulting in a seven component solution. The seven factors summarize 79% of the variance. (See Table E.2.)

Factor 1 - Learner Performance. As in the ESL-literacy factor structure, the two language performance measures, writing and reading load together. However, unlike the previous factor structure, these three variables are positively related to regularity to attendance; in the ESL-literacy case, it was length of participation in programs.

Factor 2 - Learning Environment. Three of the five variables which measure learner's satisfaction with the learning environment load here, ie. instructional hours per week, the time that classes are held and learning materials available. If a learner is positive about one of these characteristics, he/she will tend to be positive about the other two.

Factor 3 - Class Hours and Teaching Style. The third Factor brings together four variables. The inverse relationship between the number of instructional hours per week and the number of days classes are held each week means that classes tend to be longer but held only once or twice per week. The other two variables indicate that younger students tend to express greater satisfaction with their instructor's teaching style.

Factor 4 - Class Location. The loadings on Factor 4 suggest that unilingual learners who express satisfaction with the location of their classes, expect to continue to attend them for a period time. Therefore, proximity to classes seems to encourage learners' expectations of continued participation in literacy programs.

Factor 5 - Length of Participation. This factor has just one variable loading on it, length of participation in programs. Interestingly, length of participation is not related to any other variable while it played a considerably more significant role for ESL-literacy learners.

Factor 6 - The Learners. Although only two variables load on Factor 6, they do describe the learner, however, selectively. The two items indicate an inverse relationship between the number of children a learner has and his/her occupation, ie. poorer unilingual learners have more children.

Factor 7 - Previous Education. Although just one variable loads on the last Factor, it is revealing in that no other variables are related to how much previous education unilingual learners have had.

APPENDIX E.1

VARIMAX ROTATED FACTOR PATTERN - ESL-LITERACY LEARNERS

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
TOTRD	.89						
TOTWR	.84						
TOTSP	.80						
MTHS	.78						
LEVEL	.51						
HOURS		.78					
TSTYLE		.72					
HRINS		.66					
PERCENT		.63					
BOOKS		.62					
CITY		.59					
AGE			.90				
AGEARR			.82				
CHILD			.75				
YARR			-.47				
DAYS				.96			
HRS				.93			
SOCINT					.76		
OCC					.64		
LGR						.81	
LONG						-.47	
Variance Explained	16%	14%	13%	10%	7%	7%	
Eigenvalue	4.47	3.04	2.27	2.01	1.30	1.06	

APPENDIX E.2

VARIMAX ROTATED FACTOR PATTERN - UNILINGUAL LEARNERS

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor
TOTWR	.80					
PERCENT	.79					
TOTRD	.76					
HRINS		.90				
HOURS		.85				
BOOKS		.55				
HRS			.88			
TSTYLE			.57			
AGE			-.53			
DAYS			-.64			
LONG				.74		
CITY				.71		
MTHS					.85	
CHILD						.90
OCC						-.52
LGR						
Variance Explained	17%	15%	12%	11%	9%	8%
Eigenvalue	4.07	2.57	1.81	1.58	1.20	1.06

APPENDIX F

PLACE OF BIRTH

Place of Birth	Unilingual %	ESL-Literacy %
Canada	**77**	**0**
Ontario	54	0
Newfoundland	7	0
Nova Scotia	4	0
Quebec	4	0
Manitoba	4	0
New Brunswick	3	0
B.C.	1	0
Europe	**7**	**66**
Portugal	0	36
Azores	0	17
Greece	0	8
Italy	3	1
Serbia	0	2
Madeiras	0	1
United Kingdom	3	0
France	0	1
Ireland	1	0
East Asia	**0**	**8**
China	0	5
Hong Kong	0	2
Macao	0	1
South America	**0**	**8**
Brazil	0	2
Chile	0	2
Ecuador	0	1
Bolivia	0	1
Columbia	0	1
Guyana	0	1
South Asia	**1**	**7**
Sri Lank	0	3
India	1	2
Afghanistan	0	1
Pakistan	0	1
Central America	**0**	**5**
El Salvador	0	3
Guatemala	0	2
Caribbean	**7**	**2**
Jamaica	6	0
Haiti	0	2
Montserrat	1	0
Middle East	**0**	**5**
Turkey	0	3
Iran		2
Africa	**7**	**1**
Ethiopia	4	0
Gambia	3	0
East Africa	0	1
Madagascar	0	1
Mozambique	0	1
Somalia	0	1
Southeast Asia	**0**	**2**
Vietnam	0	1
Malaysia	0	1
Total* (%)	99	106
(N)	72	201

* Does not equal 100% because of rounding.

APPENDIX G

OCCUPATIONS OF LEARNERS, SPOUSES AND CHILDREN

Occupational/Category	Learner		Spouse		Children	
	Uniling. %	ESL-Lit. %	Uniling. %	ESL-Lit. %	Uniling. %	ESL-Lit. %
Professional/High Managerial	1	0	9	6	13	30
Semi-Professional/ Technical/Middle to Low Managerial	1	1	18	2	13	4
Skilled/Semi-Skilled White and Blue Collar	6	7	27	17	13	22
Unskilled Clerical and Manual	24	44	18	40	0	23
Non-Remunerative	68	49	27	32	63	10
Working Abroad	NA	NA	0	4	0	12
Total (%)*	100	101	99	101	102	103
(N)	71	197	11	133	8	92

* May not equal 100% because of rounding.

NOTE: Respondents provided information on up to five children. Therefore, percentages will not add up to 100%.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, TORONTO

INTERNAL MEMO

To: [redacted]C, Principal, [redacted]C Public School

RE: **Administration of School-Based Adult ESL/ABE Classes**

Dear [redacted]C:

This will confirm that you will be assuming the overall responsibility for the administrative aspects of the Continuing Education Department's Adult ESL-Literacy class(es) offered at [redacted]C Public School.

1. The **Supervising Principal's (ESL/ABE)** administrative duties for the class(es) include the following:

   a. Processing Payment for the instructor(s).

   b. Assigning classroom space.

   c. Submitting the Monthly Statistical Report(s) [Blue Sheets] to the Continuing Education Department.

   d. Distributing the (Grey) Ministry Class Registers to the instructor(s).

   e. Facilitating the provision of childcare (where appropriate).

   f. Consulting regarding the Summer and Fall/Winter Continuing Education program brochures.

   g. Processing the purchase of supplies and materials from funds allocated by the Continuing Education Department.

   The Lead Instructor (Program Advisor) assigned to the class(es) will be available to explain to you (or the school secretary) how to complete the monthly statistical report form (c)).

2. The Continuing Education Department's **Lead Instructor (Program Advisor)** assigned to the class(es) at [redacted]C **Public School** is: [redacted]C.

2. Continued:

Duties of Lead Instructor (Program Advisor)

a) Facilitating the opening of the class(es).

b) Collecting, for the Continuing Education Department, the Ministry Class Register(s)

c) Submitting the (Yellow) Update Sheet(s).

d) Permitting School Space (through Bert D'Antini's Office).

e) Reporting changes for the Summer and Fall/Winter Continuing Education Brochures.

Please consult the attached material for details regarding the administrative responsibilities of both the Supervising Principal (ESL/ABE) and the Lead Instructor (Program Advisor).

3. I have attached, for your information, the following documents:

a) "Adult ESL/ABE Classes Under the Supervision of an Elementary School Principal and with Program Support from the Continuing Education Department". This outlines the duties of the Supervising Principal and those of the Lead Instructor (Program Advisor).

In addition, it explains, in detail, administrative procedures that must be followed in order to ensure the smooth operation of the class(es).

b) Copies of the (Blue) Monthly Student Enrolment and Instructor Attendance Report.

c) Ministry Registers to be used by the Instructor(s) to record student enrolment and attendance.

d) Rates of Pay information.

e) Information on processing instructors pay on the school's T01 paysheet.

f) Budget Allocation for the class(es).

If you have any questions about this material or any other related matters, please do not hesitate to call me at 591-8238.

I look forward to working cooperatively with you in the provision of these very important adult programs.

Yours sincerely,

:SCW

BERT D'ANTINI,
Adult & Continuing
Education Officer,
Continuing Education.

cc:

PLEASE NOTE: For administrative purposes, as Supervising Principal, your "Class Supervisor Number" is C (See attached documents).

prinlead